

# MILITARY

ILLUSTRATED ☐ PAST & PRESENT

No. 46

MARCH 1992

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NAZI ARMSHIELDS — US  
FIELD JACKET — TUDOR  
SOLDIERS — RIFLEMEN,  
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# MILITARY ILLUSTRATED

□ PAST & PRESENT □

No. 46

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March 1992



Our cover illustration shows two members of the reconstructed Legio XIII Gemina Martia Victrix in Germany — see article p.9.

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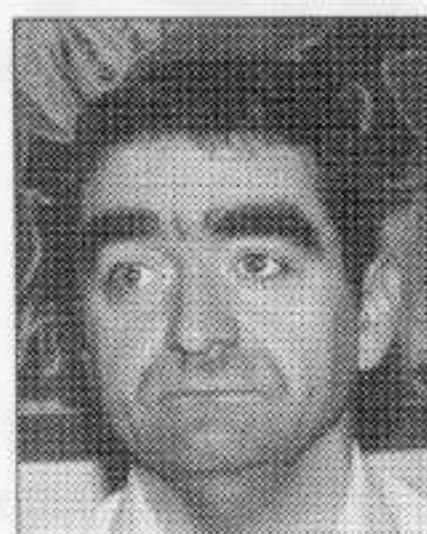
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Our article on the US Olive Drab Field Jacket — one of those items of militaria which we all think we know well, but which always benefits from detailed research in the specification records — is by **Kevin A. Mahoney**. Kevin is a freelance researcher specialising in 20th century subjects, who holds a Master's degree from Georgetown University. His particular interests are Allied special operations in the ETO and MTO during the Second World War, but his scope is much wider, and he is experienced in both film and still photograph research for publishers, TV and film companies. Kevin can be reached at P.O. Box 13110, Arlington, VA 22209, USA.

**Dan Peterson** — 'Crocodile' Peterson to those who know him — is the curator of the US Army's 3d Armored Division Museum at Frankfurt, Germany, and a very experienced re-enactor and researcher in a number of periods. A founder-member and currently 'centurion' of the impressive German-based group which recreates legionaries of the Roman *Legio XIII GMV*, he also serves as a trooper in the Roman cavalry recreation unit formed by Dr. Marcus Junkelmann, of 1985 Verona-Augsburg March fame. His new book is advertised in this issue, and we welcome the chance to publish at more length his views on specific aspects of this subject — in a series delayed by his recent commitments in the Gulf.

## EDITORIAL



**Kevin Mahoney**

### Folkestone Toy Soldier Fair

WD Model Fairs remind us that time is running out for those wishing to take space — though not for those wishing to attend — the 1st International Toy Soldier Fair at The Metropole, on The Leas in Folkestone, Kent (the same street as the well-known venue of the annual Euromilitaire shows). The Fair will take place on Saturday 28/Sunday 29 March. There will be many trade and other specialist stands; and Britains Petite Ltd. will be showing their new 1992 ranges. Special rates are available from hotels in the area — details of all kinds from Charles Davis, The Trumpet Banner, 88A Sandgate High St., Kent CT20 3BY, tel: 0303-220679. All kinds of dealers in fields broadly associated with military modelling, toy soldiers, publishing, etc. are welcome — don't delay if you want to be in on the first of what we trust will be a flourishing annual event.

### Museum thefts

The curator of Hitchin Museum, Paynes Park, Hitchin, Herts SG5 1EQ (tel: 0462-434476) appeals for any

information on four items stolen from the museum on 10 January. These are Herts. Yeomanry exhibits: a Heavy Dragoon helmet, c.1831, in white metal with gilt furniture, black horsehair falling plume, Maltese Cross plate with standing hart motif; an officer's full dress helmet, c.1909, in white metal with gilt furniture, crowned cartouche plate with hart motif, and black horsehair falling plume; an other ranks' helmet, c.1890, similar to the above; and an officer's pouch, silver flap engraved with leaf design, gilt crown and 'HYC' cypher. Any dealer or collector who may be able to help with recovery should contact Alison Taylor at the above address.



**Dan Peterson**

### S.A.R.

The Society of the American Revolution inform us of two events in Wales this year: at Porthcall on 4 May, and at Bryngw on 4/5 July. Requests for details of these, and any enquiries from would-be recruits, should be directed with an SAE to: George Bailey, Publicity Officer S.A.R., 8 Warren Court, Underdown Road, Southwick, Sussex BN42 4MN.

### Mounted Infantry

Mr David Adamson, whose interesting photos of his great-grandfather serving with 2nd Bn. KRRC Mounted Infantry in the 1890s we ran in January, wishes to correct the tentative identification of the officer to Capt. Eric Pearce-Serocold. If any readers have any other information on the unit he would be glad to hear from them at his new address: 47 Lansdowne Way, High Wycombe, Bucks. HP11 1TW.

### Hospital War Diary

An unusual and interesting book comes to light, based on the war diary of St. Thomas' Hospital, 1939-45. The illustrated story of this great London teaching hospital, particularly during the Blitz and the Flying Bomb campaign, adds a new viewpoint to any Second World War reference library. The book, by F. & D. Cockett, costs £3.50 (+ P&P) from The Friends Shop, North Wing, St. Thomas' Hospital, London SE1 7EH; enquiries to Rachel Daniels (tel: 071-928-9292, ext. 2717).

### CCS Militaria

We receive a list of dates for military memorabilia fairs, covering the whole range of interests from uniforms and badges, through models, to vehicles, at the Applemore Recreation Centre, Claypits Lane, Dibden, nr. Hythe, Southampton; enquiries to CCS Promotions on 0703-282622. Dates are 10 a.m.-4 p.m. on Saturdays 4 April, 6 June, 1 August, 3 Oct, and 5 Dec. **MI**

The 1992 auction season promises to be an interesting one: not necessarily a good one, but certainly interesting. The 'new Europe' will allegedly be with us and it is interesting to speculate on the effects that this may have on the collectors' world. France currently has restrictions that effectively limit foreign competition in the auction market and one wonders if they will be obliged to allow foreign houses to arrange auctions. Will this allow British auctioneers into the market? At the moment Monaco and Switzerland are the nearest to the French market that the British can set up house.

There will also be complications over the harmonisation of European firearms legislation. The definition of antique firearms is a thorny one which, at the moment, is exercising the minds of the Home Office. The problem is the differing cut-off dates which operate throughout Europe. In Belgium basically any firearm made before 1890 is considered to be an antique; thus Sniders and Martini Henry rifles are antique there, but not in Britain. There are signs, albeit small and scattered, that there may be some relaxation of the official British attitude towards this question. One police authority has agreed to accept a 476 Webley black powder revolver as an antique which does not require a Firearm Certificate.

The new Guide Lines for the police, an official publication giving advice on the application of the law on firearms, suggest a fairly generous

## THE AUCTION SCENE

definition of antiques — but then scuppers it by saying that each case must be judged on its merits: thus the same weapon could be declared an antique by one court and not by another. The Guide Lines also exclude ammunition from such exemption, and suggest that possession of ammunition indicates an intention to use the weapon and thus disqualifying it for exemption as an antique, which must be kept as 'curiosity or ornament'. Presumably on this argument, if a collector buys a cased percussion revolver, or even a case of dualing pistols, with a powder flask which contains some black powder, he will require a firearm certificate and the auctioneers will be in trouble for selling a firearm to someone who does not have the authority to possess it. Again, in France 22 weapons are more or less freely available, but here (understandably, given the power of modern ammunition) they are Section 1 firearms.

It promises to be a somewhat complex field; and, coupled with the draconian new rules on the possession and acquisition of black powder, the path of the shooter and collector becomes increasingly dangerous. Auctioneers will need to be very much aware of the local regulations, as will buyers, who could purchase an 'antique' weapon at, for instance, a Belgian auction only to find that they cannot import it into the UK without

a firearms certificate. Knowing the present Customs attitude to any attempt to bring in any weapon, whether antique or not, the possibilities of aggravation are depressing.

At home the big auction houses have generally reported a poor 1991 with falling profits and consequent restrictions on salary increases and bonus. There has been a tightening up of financial control, with reductions in free catalogue distribution, and all expenses are scrutinised very closely. Most important for the collector are the higher price levels set for items taken in for sale, so that the lower priced objects are just not being accepted. Some commission rates have also been increased. This is perhaps understandable from the auctioneers' point of view, but it does mean that the smaller collector will have fewer chances of buying in auction. It may be that there is now room for more auction houses such as Kent Sales which, in general, caters for the lower price range material. It is to be hoped that the general atmosphere of recession does not have too much effect on collectors, whose number has steadily decreased over the years. The stimulus for new collectors is continuously reduced by the need for greater protection of the collection, higher insurance premiums, the suspicion of many police that anybody interested in weapons must bear watching, and the reduction in

sources of supply.

One slightly encouraging sign is that there does not seem to be a marked reduction in the number of arms and armour fairs. The programme for 1992 looks fairly full with all the usual, well-established ones taking place both here and on the Continent. These events are very useful in assessing the market, for the quality and number of items offered is some measure of general demand. The tendency during 1991, both at these fairs and in auction, seemed to be towards an increased demand for militaria, uniforms, medals and equipment. Uniform and military headress seemed to hold their own very well, with little sign of falling prices. Despite all the problems generated by re-strikes, copies and downright fakes the badge market seem healthy, with some very good prices in auction. Model soldiers and similar material also shows little sign of flagging demand.

Wallis & Wallis started the year well with a pretty full sale at the beginning of the month offering a wide range of badges and other militaria and, in their Newsletter, mention that they are expecting to sell a big collection of militaria at the Special Sale in early May, shortly after the London Arms Fair. This will include some fine Foot Guards and Household Cavalry items from a collection which will be sold in part in their February sale.

**Frederick Wilkinson**



## Video Releases to Rent:

'Mission of the Shark'

(20:20 Vision:15)

'Blood Oath' (RCA/Columbia:15)

The end of the war against Japan in 1945 provides the context for two new feature releases. At midnight on 29 July 1945 torpedoes from Japanese submarine I-58 sank the USS *Indianapolis*, which was returning home having delivered to the island of Tinian the atomic bomb which was to be dropped on Hiroshima. Navy procedures meant that a ship on combat duty could not be reported overdue; this resulted in the survivors spending five days and nights in the water, contending with exposure, hunger, thirst, and shoals of sharks. Of the 900 men who survived the torpedoes, about 600 died in the water. The total death toll of about 1,200 men made it the US Navy's worst single loss on the open seas. (Filmgoers will recall that the Robert Shaw character in *Jaws* was supposed to be a survivor of this disaster).

It was also the only instance of a US Navy commander being court-martialled for the loss of his ship in World War Two. Captain Charles Butler McVay III was found not guilty of failure to give the order to abandon ship in time, but guilty of failure to take appropriate measures to evade torpedoes, this in spite of testimony from the commander of the I-58 that evasive manoeuvres would have made no difference. McVay received the support of his crew, who considered he had been made a scapegoat: they cheered him at the first reunion of survivors in 1960, but in later years he ceased attending, and committed suicide in 1968.

Richard Iscove's television movie *Mission of the Shark* (1991) is based on recently released war records. It begins with the 1960 reunion; the remainder of the film is told in extended flashback. Stacy Keach plays McVay as a man aware of his proud naval ancestry, but trapped by circumstances outside his

control. The film was mainly shot in the Bahamas; scenes set on the *Indianapolis* were shot on the USS *Alabama* at Mobile, while the court-martial scenes were shot at an old Jesuit college outside the city. The production as a whole is well above average for an American television movie.

At the age of twelve, Australian writer Brian A. Williams discovered the transcript and photographs concerning the war crimes trials his father conducted on the Indonesian islands of Ambon and Morotai. His interest developed into an ambition to write a film on the subject, finally fulfilled in collaboration with Denis Whitburn. *Blood Oath* (1990), directed by Stephen Wallace, was given a limited theatrical release in this country early in 1991 but has now been released on video. The film uses a fictional 'Capt. Cooper' to represent John Williams and, although set on Ambon, is effectively a dramatic synthesis of events that took place on both islands.

The film opens in December 1945 when a mass grave is discovered, revealing the decaying corpses of over 300 Australian servicemen. Capt. Robert Cooper (Bryan Brown) is appointed by the Australian War Crimes Tribunal to prosecute those Japanese captured on the island, particularly Vice-Adm. Baron Takahashi and his former second-in-command, the sadistic Capt. Ikeuchi. Cooper is frustrated in his efforts by the unavailability of witnesses who have died or been repatriated to Australia. Moreover, US 'observer' Maj. Beckett is evidently aiming to ensure Takahashi's acquittal to facilitate his government's policies for post-war Japan. Takahashi is duly released and Ikeuchi commits *hara-kiri* on the eve of being sentenced. Attention then focuses on Lt. Tanaka,

who claims he carried out the execution of four airmen in obedience to a direct order after a formal court-martial. The fact that Tanaka willingly gave himself up at Nagasaki, and that he protested against the ill-treatment of POWs, suggests his acquittal will be a formality. However, Cooper discovers evidence that the court-martial of the airmen never took place.

The film well conveys the atmosphere, although the introduction of 'Maj. Beckett' is a fictional device intended to symbolise the international post-war political context in which the trials were held. Bryan Brown, a popular actor in Australia, has arguably a too physical screen persona for the role of Cooper, and in one scene he attacks Ikeuchi with a vehemence worthy of Dirty Harry. The film contains some flashbacks to the atrocities carried out by the Japanese, climaxing with the beheading of the four airmen. For those who care, teen pop idol Jason Donovan has a small cameo role.

## Video Releases to Buy:

'The US Marine Corps'

(Castle Vision)

'51st Highland Division'

(51st (Highland) Division  
Officer's Club)

The Second World War also predominates in two new releases concerning famous fighting units. The US Marine Corps is the latest release in Castle Vision's War File series; in common with its predecessors, it consists almost entirely of archive footage and features a narration by actor Patrick Allen. It begins with the famous image of Marines raising the Stars and Stripes above Mount Suribachi on Iwo Jima in March 1945. It then tells the story of the Marine Corps from its origins in

the War of Independence up to 1980s service in Lebanon, Grenada and Panama. The majority of the video is concerned with the Pacific Theatre of World War Two. Most of the material will be familiar to readers of *MI*, but there are some interesting comments about the Corps' struggle to find a role for itself between the World Wars to retain its independent identity.

The 51st (Highland) Division Officers Club, in conjunction with the Services Sound and Vision Corporation, have released a video history of this famous unit. It begins with the origins of the Division as a volunteer force in the mid-19th century when Britain felt herself under threat from France. The majority of the video concerns its exploits during World War Two. While most of the British Expeditionary Force was evacuating at Dunkirk, the 'Fighting 51st' was the only British division still actively engaging the Germans. It was forced to retreat to St. Valery where the majority were captured; about one-third were able to evacuate via Cherbourg. The Division was recreated from the 9th Highland Division, and was the only British division to accompany Montgomery from El Alamein to Berlin. In two-and-a-half years of fighting, it suffered 16,000 casualties, but captured 100,000 prisoners.

This video contains a good mix of archive footage and interviews with survivors, and considers such diverse subjects as medals gained, memorials both in Britain and abroad, and life in a POW camp. This video is of a high standard, although the extended final sequence of the 1990 pilgrimage to St. Valery is likely to be of interest mainly to those who actually participated. Those interested should write to Major J.H. Nason, 1 Tipperlinn Road, Edinburgh EH10 5ET. Profits go to the Army Benevolent Fund Scotland; and a French language version is planned.

Stephen J. Greenhill

'The Royal Marines' by John Robert Young; Doubleday; 192pp., 109 colour photos by the author, 13 b/w hist. photos, 2 diagrams; £20.00

This book follows the successful formula adopted by the author/photographer for his two earlier titles, on the French Foreign Legion and the Chinese People's Liberation Army. In photographing and writing it he has travelled from the Falklands to Northern Ireland, via Hong Kong and Norway. The book is divided into five main chapters plus a historical section, a conclusion, a bibliography, and photographic notes.

For a reader looking for a good general account of the origins and modern role of the Royal Marines John Robert Young has produced an excellent work. He takes the reader through the demanding recruit training routine at Lymington, and photos capture the punishing realities of the Commando Test. Interestingly though the Arctic training in Norway is covered, there is little on the amphibious capacity which was so important in the Falklands. However, the author did accompany a patrol in

West Belfast, and gives a good idea of the pressures of this sort of work. He ends that chapter: 'After two decades, the killing fields of Northern Ireland are as ripe as ever. Perhaps it is now time to review our policy in Northern Ireland'.

He comments at the close of the book: 'Film is a question of weather, and the atmosphere I wish to create within the book. I do not allow myself to be controlled by any specific brand.' Sadly, in some instances the overall result of various technical factors, including the colour printing accepted by the book's publishers, is some very dark pictures — a problem that also beset his book on the Legion.

While *The Royal Marines* travels over more generally familiar ground than Young's earlier books, it is an interesting study, and clearly prepared with more personal effort and commitment than most of the 'famous regiment' titles produced today by so many publishers.

EWWF

## REVIEWS

'Companion to the English Civil Wars' by Peter R. Newman; Facts on File; 180pp; 5 maps; £13.95

The idea behind this book is that when reading some other work on the English Civil War and coming upon some term, event, publication or personality that is unfamiliar, one will reach for the *Companion*, which will offer a brief history. Given the complexity and variety of the events of the twenty-odd years which the Civil War is now held to cover, this could very vary valuable to most readers.

The problem with such a project is what to include, and how to fit all that could be said into the space available. In this case, given that 1,000-plus entries are listed alphabetically in only 165 pages, it might be expected that the book would be crammed with information, cut to the minimum number of essential words. This is not the case. The ten-page chronology covering the years 1640 to 1651 has no more than 17 one-line entries on any page and the

year 1645 merits only 14 dates. Valuable space has been used to pass comments which require justification and have no place in a work of reference: e.g., that Prince Rupert was 'a sober, gifted cavalry leader, if not a truly competent general.' Of Roundway Down (13 July 1643) we are told that 'Waller's army never recovered'; however, at Cheriton (29 March 1644) Waller's army is recorded as 'destroying the southern army of the king...' The selection of items is also curious. The five maps are informative and cover a wide range of actions in Ireland and Scotland, but although there is a map covering operations in England in 1643 and 1644 there is no map covering 1645 and 1646.

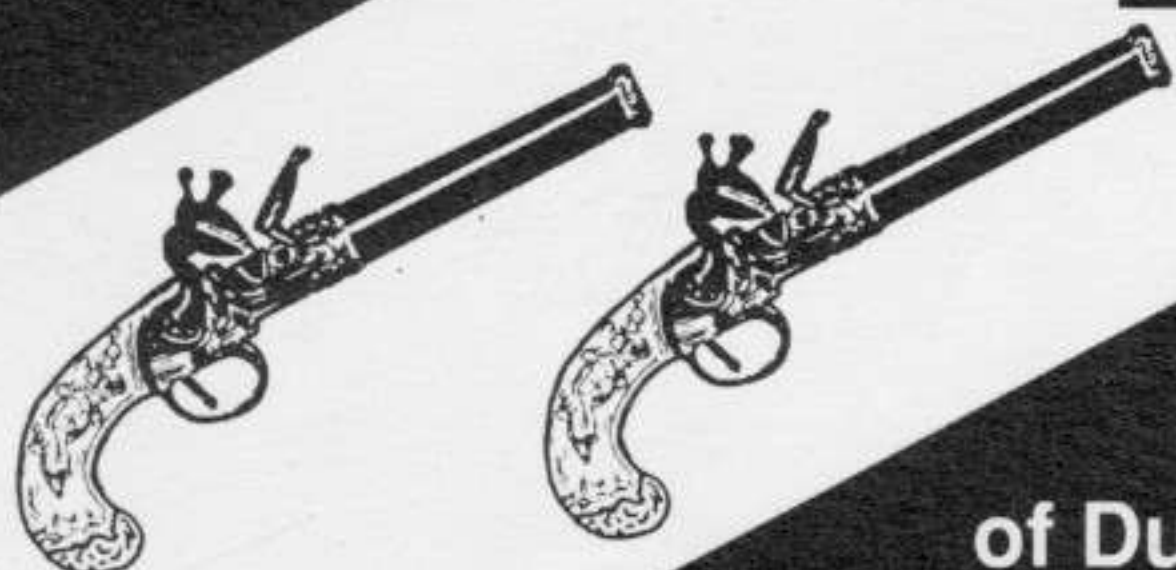
Some puzzling errors have also occurred. The entry for the second battle of Newbury seems to confuse this major battle with the events of a few days later, when the King drew off his guns from Donnington Castle after the Parliamentarians failed to accept his offer of battle. The Leveller William Thompson is said to have been killed at both Northampton and Welling-

Continued on page 8



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## REVIEWS

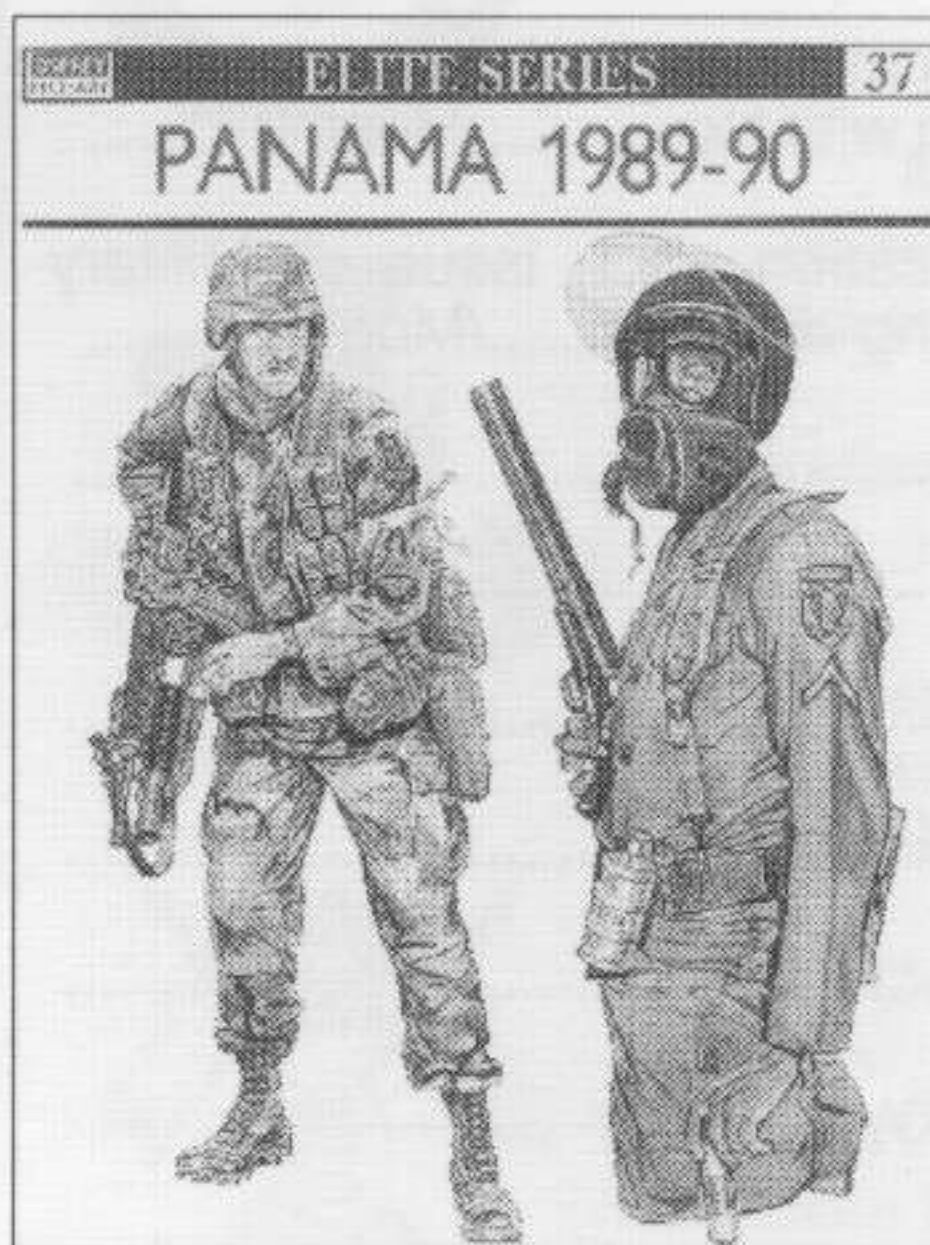
From page 5

borough in May 1649, and is then confused with Cornet James Thompson, so that he is also said to have been executed at Burford in the same month. Most disappointing are the errors in the entries dealing with military tactics and technology. Readers may be surprised by the idea that Prince Rupert introduced the development whereby 'the (cavalry) charge halted for exchange of pistol fire followed by sword play', since his success is more usually attributed to his rejection of this tactic used by the Parliamentarians.

This book does have its uses if one wishes to have a ready source to quickly discover the date of a battle, the nature of a religious sect, or a potted life of an important individual — although the late Peter Young's *Leaders of the Civil Wars* was a far superior work of biography. JPT

Osprey Elite series: all 64 pp., approx. 45 b/w illus., 12 colour plates; £7.99

Elite 37 'Panama 1989-90' by Gordon Rottman, plates by Ron Volstad. As we have come to expect from this team, this is a first class short guide to the subject. It covers in surprising depth the history of US/Panamanian relations; the career of Noriega, and the development of the crisis; the history and organisation of Panama's various armed forces, down to unit level; the composition of Joint Task Force South; the progress of Operation 'Just Cause', and its aftermath. The tone is reasonably impartial throughout, though no mealy-mouthed attempt is made to present the character of Noriega or the prowess of his followers in an unrealistically good light. The photos vary in quality, some appearing very foggy, though whether this is the fault of the images provided or the printing is hard to say; a number of them are very clear, and there are some interesting subjects.



The artwork in the colour section is lavishly detailed and varied, covering a wide range of modern US combat clothing and equipment and a good representative selection of Panamanian units. One innovation left a sour taste: in an 'action scene', a Panamanian soldier is painted at the moment of death,

complete with bullet holes. It could be argued that if we accept, in e.g. Mr McBride's 'ancient' plates, the occasional severed head, and frequent figures pierced by arrows or otherwise very visibly dead, why should we cavil at the modern equivalent? This reviewer can't give a logical answer; but still finds this plate offensive, and hopes that it is not a precedent. Nevertheless, a recommended title packed with valuable reference. JS

Elite 38 'The NVA and Viet Cong' by Ken Conboy & Ken Bowra, plates by Simon McCouaig. Like the

above title, this advertises the amount of information packed into its pages by the use of smaller than usual type. The text, by two highly qualified authors (Bowra is a colonel in the US Special Forces), describes with great authority the development and operations of the North Vietnamese Army from the end of the French War in 1954 up to the present day, though naturally devoting most space to the years of American involvement in SE Asia. The colour plates are rather more tilted towards the 1970s-80s, however. Some are excellent; others show evidence of reference being spread thinly over too many plates — a single figure from the waist up, and three very simple badges, hardly represent the 'value for space' we expect from Osprey, and find so abundantly in, e.g., the Panama title above. Inevitably many of the photos are of poor quality, copies from Asian newsprint, but they do include a number of useful figure details. All three services are covered in this book, which is particularly strong on actual regulation uniforms, service dress, etc. To summarise, stronger on text than illustrations, but clearly drawn from more authoritative sources than most of the Western publications on the subject. JS

Elite 39 'The Ancient Assyrians' by Mark Healy, plates by Angus McBride. The wealth of Assyrian wall

reliefs, and the interpretive work of generations of historians, coupled with the invaluable survival of actual texts of the day, allow a quite detailed study of the composition and appearance of the armies of this great Mesopotamian power in the 10th to 7th centuries BC. Mr Healy has written an interesting chronological account of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, with clearly explained sections on the nature and tactics of the imperial armies at various major dates. This reviewer, new to the subject, found it fascinating. (How could one not respond to such splendid names — Tiglath-Pileser, Sargon, Ashurbanipal — these men were obviously born to be conquering kings!) The monochrome illustrations are largely photos or drawings of the wall reliefs, showing all 'arms of service' in action; and while not brilliantly printed, usefully support Mr McBride's superb colour plates, full of character and detail. 'Ancient' modellers are tempted here by no less than three different chariots in action, and a full-scale city storming with siege engines. Recommended. JS



# LEGIO XIII GMV

## Roman Legionaries Recreated (1)

DANIEL PETERSON

A museum curator and experienced 'living history' re-enactor introduces one of the most interesting and authentic of today's 'recreated' Roman military groups.

Most of the currently active 'living history' groups which attempt to recreate the appearance of units of the Imperial Roman army assign themselves the number and name of a historic legion — often one which may have operated in the region where they live today. In all but a few cases this is merely a symbolic gesture, due to the lack of specific, unit-related archaeological evidence; most such groups are 'generic', representing the 'typical' Roman soldiers of a given period with varying degrees of authenticity. A possible exception is *Legio XIII Gemina Martia Victrix*. Born in 1982, it is, among serious reconstruction groups, second in longevity only to the well-known English group the Ermine Street Guard.

*Legio XIII* had its origins in an exhibit created by the staff of the US Army's 3d Armored Division Museum in Frankfurt, Germany. By coincidence, the stationing of the division in 1982 was remarkably similar to the positioning of Roman units in the same region after the Chatti War of 83 AD. The 'Fulda Gap', a natural invasion route from the north German plain to the Rhine, seems to have been as apparent to the Emperor Domitian as it was to NATO tacticians 1900 years later. With its HQ in Frankfurt, the 3d Arm'd. Div. controlled brigades in Friedberg, Butzbach and Hanau. Nineteen centuries earlier these same towns were Roman forts, the largest, at Frankfurt, apparently representing a regional headquarters.

In addition to a lively interest in the Roman Army, sever-

al founder members of the group were qualified by being transplanted re-enactors from some of the most authentic 'living history' groups in the USA, brought to Germany by real-life service in the US Army. This combination of prior experience and actual military service helped the group to establish and maintain high standards of authenticity, and to accept the sometimes punishing conditions inescapable when adopting the role of Roman soldiers on the march and in the field. From the beginning it was decided that the group would be more than a 'display society', but would drill, work, march, eat and sleep like Romans 24 hours a day when depicting their *alter egos*.

The group began with the distinct advantage of being in the heart of probably the world's richest concentration of Roman military archaeological evidence. Museums less than an hour's drive from Frankfurt contain over a dozen original legionary helmets and many other significant artifacts. The largest single collection of Roman military tombstones — a vital aspect of costume and armour research — is at nearby Mainz; and 15 minutes' away, near Bad Homburg, is the Saalburg, the world's most complete reconstruction of a Roman fort. Being associated with an official museum opened up for the group much support and co-operation from German museums and archaeologists.

It was predetermined that the group would depict the period of the most significant Roman military event in their region: Domitian's war



against the Germanic tribe named in Roman texts as the Chatti, whose aftermath established a new frontier — the *limes* — and its associated forts mentioned above. As this war began in 83 AD, it was convenient for the purposes of display commentary to explain that the group represented the Roman army of exactly 1900 years before, and would strive to depict the 'current' year as far as research allowed.

This Flavian period is the one most popular among Roman reconstruction groups. Partly this choice may have been inspired by the example of the Ermine Street Guard, which had already attracted much attention since its foundation in 1972. More obviously, the Flavian period offers a wealth of surviving artifacts and sculptural evidence, and textual material from the works of historians such as Tacitus and Josephus. Not only do we know more about the Roman soldier of this than of any other period; we also have a mass of evidence on all aspects of everyday civil life, culled from a wealth of surviving literature and from the extraordinary 'time capsules' of Pompeii and

*The members of Legio XIII GMV are more than a 'dell display' team: they carry out extensive 'living history' experiments, marching, camping, and working in museum-quality reconstruction armour and kit. They thus make a real contribution to our knowledge of the daily reality of the legionary's service life. (All photos courtesy of the author)*

Herculaneum, frozen forever by the 79 AD eruption of Vesuvius.

### CHOOSING A LEGION

After selecting the time and place, the next step was to choose a unit. While the group would depict a variety of different individual auxiliary troop styles for display purposes, it was decided that the majority of members would depict legionaries and their officers in a regular 'century'. Research indicated that two legions based at Mainz would certainly have taken part in the Chatti War: *Legio I Adiatrix*, and *Legio XIII Gemina Martia Victrix*. Joining them at Mainz was *Legio XXI Rapax* from Bonn, which was replaced there by the newly-raised *Legio I Minerva*. It soon became apparent that *Legio XIII GMV* offered the most material evidence on which to base a reconstruction group.



(It should be explained at this point why the group always uses the 'XIII' form for the numeral 14, instead of the familiar 'XIV'. In the period depicted official inscriptions, including legionary designations, seem invariably to use the form 'III' for 'four', and 'XIII' for '14'. (Needless to say, in at least 50% of the articles, acknowledgements, and other printed references to our group, kindly sub-editors 'correct' the number, usually by cutting it to 'XIII' — which compounds the confusion, since there was also a unit designated *Legio XIII Gemina*, though we know much less about its equipment, standards, shield emblem, and so forth.)

### The legion's history

Although the record is disputed, the weight of evidence indicates that *Legio XIII GMV* was born of the amalgamation of two other legions at the end of the civil war between Octavian and Antony, c.30 BC; nearly two dozen legions were retained, some 40 others being disbanded. 'Gemina' is from the same Latin root as 'Geminae' ('twins'), and Caesar explained an earlier use of the term as meaning 'one legion made out of two'. Prior to Augustus' German campaign *Legio XIII* was probably in Illyricum (part of the modern

Balkans).

The legion was in Germany during the 9 AD campaign, but was not serving under P. Quinctilius Varus, and so avoided the fate of *Legiones XVII, XVIII* and *XIX* in the Teutoburg Forest disaster. The legion was part of the army of Germanicus which raided aggressively into Germany to avenge Varus' massacre in the years which followed; and remained at Moguntiacum (Mainz) until 43 AD when — together with *II Augusta*, *IX Hispana* and *XX Valeria* — it was summoned for the invasion of Britain.

In Britain *XIII Gemina* shared a double-legion camp with *XX Valeria* at Viroconium (Wroxeter). During Boudica's revolt in 60-61 AD these two legions, serving under G. Suetonius Paulinus, destroyed a much larger force of Iceni and other rebels near St. Albans, effectively ending the rising. Both were honoured for their participation in this victory — without which it is entirely arguable that the province of Britain would have been lost to Rome — the Twentieth taking the additional suffix 'Victrix' and the Fourteenth 'Martia Victrix' (the full title thus becoming, roughly, 'The Fourteenth Legion, the Twinned, Victorious in War').

In 66 AD Nero ordered

*Legio XIII GMV* to the Bosphorus for an expedition against the Albani. While they were still en route, however, a revolt broke out in Gaul led by one Vindex, and the *XIII GMV* was recalled to Italy, probably from Dalmatia, as insurance against his possible success; they returned to Dalmatia in 69 AD, 'Year of the Three Emperors', on the accession of Galba. He was supplanted by Otho, who was in turn challenged by Vitellius. Vitellius ordered a detachment from *XIII GMV*, together with *VII Gemina*, *XIII Gemina* and *XI Claudia* back to Italy. With Otho's defeat and death, Vitellius ordered *XIII GMV* back to Britain. The posting was short-lived: the legion was brought back to Germany during Civilis' unsuccessful revolt. With the accession of Vespasian and the end of the civil wars the legion returned to its old garrison at Mainz in 70 AD, 27 years after marching out for the invasion of Britain.

*Legio XIII GMV* took part in operations against the Germanic tribes in 72-73; and again in the major Chatti War of 83, which saw the establishment of the line of defences in the Rhine-Danube gap known as the *limes*. In 89 AD Saturninus, Governor of Upper Germany, induced the

Mainz-based *Legiones XIII GMV* and *XXI Rapax* to revolt against the emperor Domitian by seizing the unit savings banks, but the mutiny was foiled by the loyalty of legions in Lower Germany. Some two years later *XIII GMV* was ordered to Pannonia to mass with ten other legions for Domitian's doomed Dacian campaign, during which a severe defeat was apparently suffered, involving the destruction of *Legio V Alaudae*. *XIII GMV* remained in Pannonia, probably at Brigetio and later Vindobona. The legion probably took part in both Trajan's Dacian Wars, though few individual legions can be identified from the fragmentary surviving records. After the Dacian Wars *XIII GMV* remained in Pannonia garrisoning Carnuntum. The legion probably took part in Turbo's campaign against the Iazyges, and elements in the Parthian and Marcomanni wars in Marcus Aurelius' reign.

### GROUP ACTIVITIES

Members of *Legio XIII* are kept occupied throughout the year with activities ranging from the construction of equipment, usually in winter, to public displays and 'archaeological experiments'. Its first noteworthy accomplishment came in 1984 when a group of eight men took part in the International Four Day Marches at Nijmegen, Holland. Military units from many armies participate, and the attendance of Roman soldiers attracted great publicity. Although the group did not yet have Roman marching packs, they were properly proud of their achievement in marching 100 miles, 25 miles



*Legio XIII GMV on the march in open country, with full packs. This type of exercise, possible because of access to U.S. Army training areas, has been sometimes punishing but always educational; some conclusions will be discussed in a future article. Note here, however, how the men carry their pack-staves low, the load resting behind the shoulder, rather than above the head as on Trajan's Column: a moment's experience of the actual weights and balances involved was enough to confirm this position.*



on four consecutive days, in full armour and with weapons (authentic marching packs would anyway have taken them over the regulation weight limit).

Since its formation the group has conducted displays and 'living history' camps at historic Roman locations as far afield as Colchester, England and the amphitheatre at Verona, Italy. Given its unofficial ties with the US Army it also supports a great many US Army events such as military history educational programmes. In the course of one such event about 15 officers from one of the 3d. Armd. Div. battalions were kitted up in Roman equipment and experienced life as legionaries at the Saalburg fort. *Legio XIII* has also conducted displays for the US Forces Dependent School System, the Royal Dutch Military Academy, and the French Army's military history pageant at Mourmelon.

The group has been invited to participate in the '2000th Anniversaries' of several German towns and cities, prominent among these being the 1985 celebrations at Augsburg. Here *Legio XIII GMV* encountered for the first time *Legio XXI Rapax*, the extremely authentic German group depicting Augustan-period legionaries. Neither unit was aware of the other's existence until they met at Augsburg; and there were some initial hard feelings in the ranks of *XXI Rapax*, who had marched right over the Alps from Verona, and reckoned that Augsburg had invited another Roman group as insurance, in the belief that they would never make it...

Although *XXI Rapax*, founded for this event, disbanded shortly after their epic march, their founder Dr. Marcus Junkelmann raised in its place a Flavian-period Roman cavalry unit, *Ala II Flavia*, who enjoy close relations with *XIII GMV*. The groups have mounted many joint displays, pooling equipment to create large 'living history' camps, and engage in infantry-vs.-cavalry battle



displays.

*Legio XIII GMV* also maintains good relations with other Roman units on the Continent, participating in joint displays with *Legio VI Victrix* and the auxiliary *Cohors III Vindelicorum* from Germany and *Legio X Gemina* from Holland. The groups share research, equipment sources, and kit swaps to mutual benefit. Closer co-operation with the British-based groups is planned, possibly culminating in an international gathering of all authentic reconstruction units for the 1950th anniversary commemoration of the invasion of Britain in 1993.

#### Private satisfaction

Many of the group's activities are not for the public but for the members' personal satisfaction. A large tract of the *lines*, including a reconstructed Roman watchtower, falls within a US Army training area, allowing 'living history' camps and marches uninter-

*The group carry out a busy programme of education events in co-operation with US Forces Germany: here GI's and legionaries compare notions.*

rupted by spectators and modern anachronisms. For all, the primary drive is a deep and respectful interest in the Roman army. For many, another reward is the challenge of making the armour and equipment. For others, it is the fascination of authentic drill, camp life, and even 'combat' of a period remote from their previous experience which gives the greatest satisfaction. One member, Steve Greeley, the group's co-founder and 'Optio', has applied the knowledge gained from practical experiments to perfect what is probably the most realistic set of wargaming rules for the Roman era.

*Legio XIII* does not have the strict membership criteria of some reconstruction societies. While the 'legion headquarters' does maintain most

of the camp equipage, artillery, and extra sets of 'issue' armour, many of the members own their own equipment. The main criteria for joining are a sincere interest in the subject; possession, or willingness to obtain full equipment meeting the unit's standards of authenticity; reasonable fitness for the sometimes strenuous activities; and a co-operative spirit coupled with a willingness to follow orders. While the original membership were all drawn from the US Army there are now a number of German members, who include archaeology students and a professional armourer.

With the current reduction of US forces in Europe the fate of *Legio XIII* is uncertain. Should the principal organizers of the group be obliged to depart there would be some question as to whether it would continue in being in Germany or live on only in America. Just as the raising of the group, and the military deployment of Roman and US troops, represented coincidences of time and place, so the future may hold another: if the 3d Armd. Div. leaves Germany this year, it will be exactly 1900 years since *Legio XIII Gemina Martia Victrix* departed for a new assignment in Pannonia. **MI**

**To be continued:** Future articles in this series will discuss in depth the group's armour, weapons and equipment, and the historical evidence upon which they are based.

**Note:** A new book by the author of this article — '**The Roman Legions Recreated in Colour Photographs**' — is published later this month by Windrow & Greene Ltd., 5 Gerrard St., London W1V 7LJ (tel: 071-287-4570, fax 071-494-3869). A 96-page large format paperback illustrated with some 20 colour photographs of members of all the main Roman reconstruction groups and their gear, the book is priced at £12.95 + 10% UK P&P. Trade orders please quote ISBN 1 872004 0.





#### **Above:**

Detachment of Legio XIII GMV outside the eastern via principia gate of the reconstructed Saalburg fort near Bad Homburg. Rebuilt late in the 19th century on the original site, it reflects the state of historical knowledge about the details of Roman forts at that time, and remains enormously impressive. The legionaries wear classic Flavian armour — now termed the lorica segmentata, though this is a modern term, and historian/armourer Michael Simkins convincingly argues that lorica laminata is a more likely Roman designation. Note the range of 'Imperial Gallic' and 'Italic' helmets, avoiding a probably anomalous modern impression of absolute uniformity in the ranks; the optio's helmet feathers; the centurio, signifer and cornucen at left in variations of scale and mail armour (to be discussed in a future part of this series); and the shield motif.

#### **Left:**

Bronze 'Imperial Gallic type I' helmet reconstruction based on one found in the Rhine at Mainz. It seems possible that more Imperial legionary helmets than previously thought were actually of bronze rather than iron. The more expensive metal would have been 'recycled' — to judge by the stripping of discarded iron helmets of their bronze furniture — and so finds are limited to accidental losses, distorting the archaeological record. The details of decoration on this example are clearly legionary rather than auxiliary in style.

#### **Opposite:**

Signifer of Legio XIII GMV, based on evidence provided by the

remarkable coincidental survival of no less than three tomb stelae of standard-bearers of this unit: the aquilifer Gn. Musius, and signa-bearers Q. Luccius Faustus and G. Valerius Secundus. Note caped shoulder doubling of the mail shirt, normally a cavalry feature but often seen on infantry standard-bearers; and the masked helmet and bearskin — the sculptural record also shows the helmet carried casually on the left shoulder, held in place by the bearskin. Each century of a legion probably carried a signum, the number of discs perhaps indicating the century within the cohort, since six is the greatest number found. The Capricorn emblem, taken from both tombstones, was clearly associated with this legion.

The shield motif is taken from the stela of the eagle-bearer Musius; all three tombstones show oval shields, although Trajan's Column shows the round parma. The identification of a specific legion's shield decoration is very rare, despite some fancifully elaborate theories about Trajan's Column which have been published elsewhere.

#### **Opposite above:**

A vexillum or flag marked with the abbreviated title and number of the legion is carried from the shrine in the fort principia — HQ building — where standards were kept when not in use. The relationship between the vexillum and the other legionary standards is imperfectly understood, although the term 'vexillation' certainly seems to have referred to a detached force of men from a legion. The scant evidence suggests that the motif was





limited to the abbreviated designation. A departure from the absolutely rigorous interpretation of the sculptural record is the Capricorn finial. One has been found, pierced and socketed in such a way that it could well have served this purpose; Trajan's Column shows a vexillum finial of sculptural form; and the Capricorn, as already stated, was associated with Legio XIII GMV.

Note the slight variations between the guards' shields. Left is the 'clipped' scutum, straight at top and bottom but retaining the curved sides of the earlier Republican oval shield; right is the classic 'tile'-shaped scutum, here with a fancy niello-decorated boss copied from a recovered example. The left hand guard wears a 'Corbridge A' lorica, his comrade 'Corbridge B', varying in slight details.

**Front cover:** The 'Corbridge' lorica can be put on and taken off by an unaided man, like a jacket, once the front laces are untied; but it is easier and quicker if two comrades help one another. It also minimises the strain on the straps, buckles and hinges, which are surprisingly fragile — as attested by the number of broken fittings found all over the former Roman Empire. The iron cuirass, assembled from 40 separate plates held in articulation by internal straps, rivets, and hinges, weighs around 5.5kg.



# German Campaign Shields, 1940-45 (I)

GORDON WILLIAMSON

Campaign decorations for the armed forces of the Third Reich took a number of forms including medals, non-portable plaques and medallions, cuff-bands, and numerous semi-official unit level awards. However, probably the most striking in design, and certainly amongst the most sought after by collectors, are the arm shields or *Armelschilder*.

Several such shields were projected, designed and approved at Reich level, but in fact only six were produced and formally awarded. Before studying these individual awards, there are certain features which can be taken as common unless otherwise stated in the description of the individual award.

## Manufacture, issue and wear

Arm shields were generally hollow-backed die-struck pieces made from sheet metals ranging from brass to white metal or zinc. On the reverse face were attached three or four flat prongs. These prongs passed through a backing cloth matching the wearer's uniform, and then through a metal backing plate; the prongs were then folded over to hold the assembly together. The whole reverse was finally covered in cloth or paper to prevent the prongs snagging the wearer's uniform. The shield was then sewn, by its backing cloth, to the upper left sleeve of the uniform. If two shields were won, they would be placed one above the other with the earlier shield on top. If three were won, they would be placed one above and two below. Finish on the shield could range from high quality plating or anodising on earlier pieces to cheap painted finish on later production examples.

Each recipient was given a certificate of possession or *Besitzzeugnis* to prove his entitlement to the award, and an entry was made in his service

record book (*Wehrpass*) and his paybook (*Soldbuch*). The recipient could purchase additional examples of the awards for wear on extra uniforms by producing his *Besitzzeugnis* at a retail outlet controlled by the Association of German Award Manufacturers or *Leistungsgemeinschaft deutscher Ordenshersteller*. Typical prices would range from around RM1.00 to RM1.50 depending on whether it was purchased complete with a backing plate and cloth. Recipients could also purchase a small stick pin miniature for wear on the left lapel of civilian dress.

## NARVIK SHIELD

The first officially sanctioned German campaign decoration of the Second World War was the *Narvikschild*, instituted by Hitler on 19 August 1940 to recognise the achievements of the combined land, sea and air elements of the Wehrmacht in the critical battle for the Norwegian port of Narvik between 9 April and 9 June 1940.

The award, designed by Professor Richard Klein on Hitler's orders, consisted of a closed-wing eagle atop a wreathed swastika over a horizontal panel bearing the title 'Narvik'. The shield-shaped lower portion of the award featured the date '1940' and — symbolising the three branches of the Armed Forces — an anchor for the Navy, a propeller for the Air Force and an edelweiss for the Mountain Troops of the Army.



**Left:**  
The Narvik Shield in silver. This particular piece is in silver-painted zinc, a late example, and is on Army field grey backing cloth.

**Below:**  
The naval version of the Narvik Shield in gilt finish, mounted on a dark navy blue cloth backing.



This shield was unique in being produced in two forms: gilt-coloured for the Navy, and silver for the Army and Air Force. Silver-coloured shields are normally found on field grey or field blue cloth with the gilt version on dark navy blue cloth. Gilt examples are occasionally encountered on field grey cloth, worn by Narvik veterans who served in the Marine Artillery (shore-based sailors who

wore field grey Army-style uniforms). At least one example is known of a Narvik naval veteran who subsequently served as an SS officer on Hitler's staff, and from photographic evidence wore the gilt *Narvikschild* on both field grey and black Panzer jackets.

Records show the total number of awards of the Narvik Shield as follows:

Army	206
2. Gebirgs-Division	



3. Gebirgs-Division	2,338
Others	59
Posthumous	152
<b>Total:</b>	<b>2,755</b>
<i>Navy</i>	
Destroyers	2,672
Others	115
Merchant Navy	442
Posthumous Navy	411
Posthumous Merchant Navy	22
<b>Total:</b>	<b>3,661</b>
<i>Luftwaffe</i>	
Flying Crew	1,309
Paratroopers	756
Posthumous	96
<b>Total:</b>	<b>2,161</b>

Each recipient was issued with three examples of the shield, and could purchase additional examples through retail outlets by producing proof of his entitlement.

Each award was accompanied by a possession certificate. Three principal types are known for the Narvikschild:

#### *Type 1*

This bears only the legend 'In the name of the Führer..... is awarded the Narvik Shield'. The certificate has the signature of General der Gebirgstruppen Dietl, as well as the date of the award and the seal of Gebirgskorps Norwegen.

#### *Type 2*

This is virtually identical to the first type but bears an

illustration of the shield in the top left corner.

#### *Type 3*

This type bears the amended legend, 'In the name of the Führer, the Narvik fighter, fallen for Folk and Führer..... is awarded the Narvik Shield'. This posthumous award document is extremely rare and genuine examples are seldom encountered.

Type 1 was used predominantly for Army and Air Force awards and Type 2 for the Navy. All were of the same dimensions, some 210mm x 150mm.

The first Narvik Shield was awarded to General der Gebirgstruppen Eduard Dietl, the 'Hero of Narvik' who also became the first-ever recipient of the Oakleaves to the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross for his success in the Norwegian campaign.

### CHOLM SHIELD

During the Soviet counter-offensive in the winter of 1941-42, several thousand German troops were cut off by the Russian 11th Army in a 'pocket' around the small town of Kholm, on the River Lovat between Velikiye Luki and Staraya Russa. Hitler pronounced one of his famous 'Fortress' orders, insisting that the area be defended to



#### **Below:**

*Knight's Cross winner Wolf Hagemann, a field officer of Mountain Light Infantry, clearly showing the position of wear of the Army Narvik Shield in this fine study. (Josef Charita)*

#### **Above:**

*Oberfeldwebel Karl Kern, a Knight's Cross winning pilot of Transport Geschwader 3, wears the Luftwaffe Narvik Shield very high on the left sleeve of his Fliegerbluse. (Josef Charita)*



the last man; no retreat would be considered. Placed in command of the 'Fortress' was Generalmajor Scherer, commander of 251. Sicherungs-Division. Those serving at Kholm included Army grenadiers, artillery and Gebirgsjäger, a Police Reserve Battalion, an Army mounted unit, and elements of a naval transport unit. Luftwaffe personnel who landed supplies for the beleaguered garrison were also eligible for the Cholm Shield (German spelling).

Despite cold, hunger and typhus the garrison held out against overwhelming odds, a feat for which recognition was clearly required. It came initially in the form of the award of the Oakleaves to the Knight's Cross of the Iron





**Left:**  
SS-Untersturmführer Krüge, from Hitler's personal staff, was a former sailor and veteran of the Narvik battle. Here he wears the Narvik Shield in gilt, on its original navy blue backing, on the field grey Wehrmacht uniform. (Josef Chornia)

**Below:**  
The rarest of the shields, that for the battle at Cholm in early 1942, has on field grey backing. Only about 6,000 were awarded, compared with e.g. hundreds of thousands of Krum Shields.



Cross for Generalmajor Scherer. Encouraged by Scherer, an NCO of the Police Reserve Battalion — Polizei Rottwachtmeister Schlimmer — drew up a design for a commemorative arm shield. This was submitted for approval, and after only minor design alterations by Professor Klein in Munich was approved by Hitler for production. (Schlimmer's

original design differed from that finally produced only in being of greater overall length and having the eagle's head facing right.) The official institution date was 1 July 1942, and award was open to all who had participated in the defence of 'Fortress Cholm' between 21 January and 5 May 1942.

The Cholmschild is a striking, shield-shaped award

measuring 65mm high by 40mm wide. Its central motif is an eagle with folded wings, perched atop an Iron Cross with a swastika in its centre. At the base is the legend 'Cholm 1942'. Early production examples were struck in lightweight, magnetic, white metal and were backed with a large oval cloth patch. Later examples, and most of those sold through LdO outlets, were in non-magnetic zinc

and were mounted on a shield-shaped backing cloth. Thus, to some degree it can be established whether a particular shield may possibly be one of the original award pieces, or a later piece which may have been purchased by the recipient. The later shields were some 10g heavier than the early white metal examples.

With just over 6,000 awarded this is the rarest of all the arm shields, and originals now fetch very high prices. Most of those encountered are on field grey backing; field blue Luftwaffe backing is rarely encountered. Strictly speak-

## Besitzzeugnis

In Namen des Führers

wurde dem

Feldwebel Alex Uhlig

1./Palschirm-Jäger Bgt. 1

der **Narvikschild** verliehen.



K.H. Uhlig, 400. 1.3.1942.  
(Gen. und Unters.)

*[Signature]*

General der Gebirgstruppen  
Befehlshaber der Gruppe Narvik

Typical Narvikschild award certificate, here to a Luftwaffe paratrooper, Alex Uhlig, who went on to win the Knight's Cross in Normandy. (Alex Uhlig)



*A rare shot of the commander of Kampfgruppe Scherer, General-major Theodor Scherer of 251. Sicherungs-Division, in which his Cholm shield can be seen on the upper left sleeve of his tunic. Note also his pale-tinted Gebirgsmütze, with a noticeably short peak (Josef Charita).*

ing it is not impossible that examples on navy blue backing may exist, as a naval transport unit did operate on the Lovat at Kholm. However, as these troops wore field grey dress in normal service such awards were unlikely to have been made on dark blue cloth.

The award document for the Cholm Shield was rather plain, bearing only the legend, 'Im Namen / Des Führers / Würde Dem / ...' (then followed the rank, name and unit of the recipient in three lines)... Der / Cholmchild / Verlichen.' At the foot of the document was the date, the signature of Generalmajor Scherer and the seal of Kampfgruppe Scherer.

### KRIM SHIELD

The most widely distributed and best known of the arm shields was that for the campaign in the Crimean Peninsula. It was promulgated in July 1942 with the follow-

*The Krim Shield: this example is of a dark bronze colour, on Army field grey backing.*



you to Generalfeldmarschall. With your promotion and through the institution of the commemorative shield for all Crimea combatants, I honour, on behalf on the entire German people, the heroic achievements of the troops under your command.'

The shield was officially instituted on 25 July 1942, and was approved for award to all those who were honourably engaged in combat in the Crimea between 21 September 1941 and 4 July 1942 and who could fulfil the appropriate qualifications, which included: (1) taking part in a major action; (2) being wounded in action; (3) having completed three months' unbroken service in the Crimea. This last quali-

*Luftwaffe ground attack ace Oberleutnant Alfred Drischel, of Schlachtgeschwader 1, wears the Krim Shield on Luftwaffe field blue backing on the upper left sleeve.*

ing telegram from Hitler to the commander of the forces in the Crimea, General Erich von Manstein:

'In thankful appreciation of your particular merit in the victorious battle for the Crimea, with the destruction of Kertsch and the overcoming of the natural, and powerful man-made defences of the Sebastopol fortress, I promote





# BESITZ-ZEUGNIS



IM NAMEN DES FÜHRERS  
WURDE DEM

Oberstleutnant Kammerer, Franz

Stab II./Gr.Rgt.437

## DER KRIMSCHILD

VERLIEHEN



*Manstein*  
GENERALFELDMARSCHALL

B 5211 Heidelberg: Gutenberg-Druckerei GmbH. XII. 42

One of the more elaborate versions of the award document for the Krim Shield; this example is named to Oberstleutnant Franz Kammerer, who was also awarded the German Cross in Gold.

cation was introduced in order to prevent those who were merely 'passing through' the combat area from qualifying for the award on a technicality; only those genuinely serving in the area could qualify. Despite these restrictions, some 200,000 - 300,000 awards were made. Each soldier was eligible for five examples of the shield for attaching to various uniforms. In the case of posthumous awards, one shield plus the possession certificate was sent to the next of kin. Thus, well over a million of these shields were issued, making the *Krimchild* the commonest of all the shields.

The Krim Shield was one of the best executed of all of the arm shields. Strikingly

designed, it featured a large eagle with outstretched wings and clutching a wreathed swastika between '1941' and '1942', over a shield-shaped field upon which was a map of the Crimea. In the centre of the Crimean Peninsula map was the word 'KRIM'. Depending on the example encountered, the finish can range from a pale golden brownish shade to a deep chocolate-coloured bronze.

Rumanian troops who served with distinction in the Crimea were also eligible for the award; and a special version of the *Krimchild* in genuine gold was presented to the Rumanian Chief of Staff Marshall Antonescu. A further genuine gold shield was presented to Generalfeldmarschall von Manstein by his staff officers on the occasion of his birthday on 24 November 1943. Manstein also used the design of the *Krimchild* as his personal emblem on his vehicles and

aircraft.

The Krim Shield was authorised for wear on virtually all uniforms including white summer dress, tan tropical dress and the brown uniform of the Nazi Party, and may thus be encountered on a wide range of different coloured backing cloths. The most common, however, is the field grey of the Army, while those on black Panzer or navy blue Kriegsmarine backing are particularly sought-after.

In view of the number of awards made it is perhaps not surprising that a large range of styles of possession certificates were also produced. These ranged from the most basic styles with text only, to elaborate variants having fancy borders, illustrations of the award, etc.

The majority of examples of the *Krimchild* featured four fastening prongs on the reverse; a few, however, were made with four tabs on the

# Besitzzeugnis



IM NAMEN DES FÜHRERS

WURDE DEM

Oberstleutnant  
(Dienstgrad)

Anton Kühnen  
(Vollständiger Name)

Stabs-Battr.I./Geb.)A.R.28  
(Truppenteil)

## Der Krimschild

VERLIEHEN.

A.H. u., den 30. JAN. 1943 1942  
(Tag und Datum)



*Manstein*  
GENERALFELDMARSCHALL

Another variant of the Krim Shield document, with more elaborate lettering and a more accurate rendering of the award itself; it is named to a Mountain Artillery gunner, Anton Kühnen.

edge of the shield itself — i.e. stamped out in one piece with the shield body — which located in four notches in the edge of the backplate. These were very fragile, and many surviving examples have these tabs broken off. **MI**

**To be continued:** Part 2 of this article will describe and illustrate the Demjansk, Kuban, Lapland, Warsaw, Balkans, Dunkirk, and Lorient Shields, or will discuss the evidence in disputed cases.



# The US Olive Drab Field Jacket

KEVIN A. MAHONEY

One of the most readily recognizable clothing items worn by the GI of World War II is the Olive Drab Field Jacket, sometimes called the M41 Field Jacket. This usually grimy windbreaker, seen in countless photographs, is a symbol of the American soldier of the early 1940s. Approximately 23,000,000 were made, many more than any other field jacket. As such it is worthy of a closer look, since it was a significant departure from the traditional approach to clothing the combat soldier, and began a tradition in combat clothing which is still followed today in most of the world's armies.

The jacket was the first to be designed and used by a major army specifically for use in the field (in combat), and departed from the traditional practice of using a service dress tunic for combat wear. The Army first thought of replacing the enlisted man's four-pocket wool service coat in the mid-1930s. By early 1940 General Parsons, the commander of the US Army's III Corps, had been ordered to study the practicability of developing such a windbreaker. The four-pocket service coat was usually fitted tightly to give a smart appearance, and hence was less suitable for field use where a loose-fitting garment would allow a soldier the necessary ease of movement. General Parsons decided to test a number of commercially-made jackets to see if any could be used by the military, eventually examining over 300.

None of these jackets was simple enough to be produced quickly, and all lacked what was seen as a 'military appearance'. However, he did conclude, in June 1940, that a windbreaker-type jacket would be preferable for use in combat. His primary emphasis was on the needs of the infantryman, so he designed a jacket which was not only warm and comfortable, but also lightweight and of no great bulk so it could be carried easily.

Parsons' original report recommends that the jacket have: a cotton shell of windproof material, a light-weight wool lining, closure with both buttons and zipper, and a warm collar which could be worn in different positions. Only five sizes of the jacket were believed to be necessary to fit 95 per cent of the soldiers of any command. In each size the jackets were to be 'loose fitting' to facilitate movement in field conditions. Shoulder straps were recommended only for jackets to be worn by cavalry troops, to

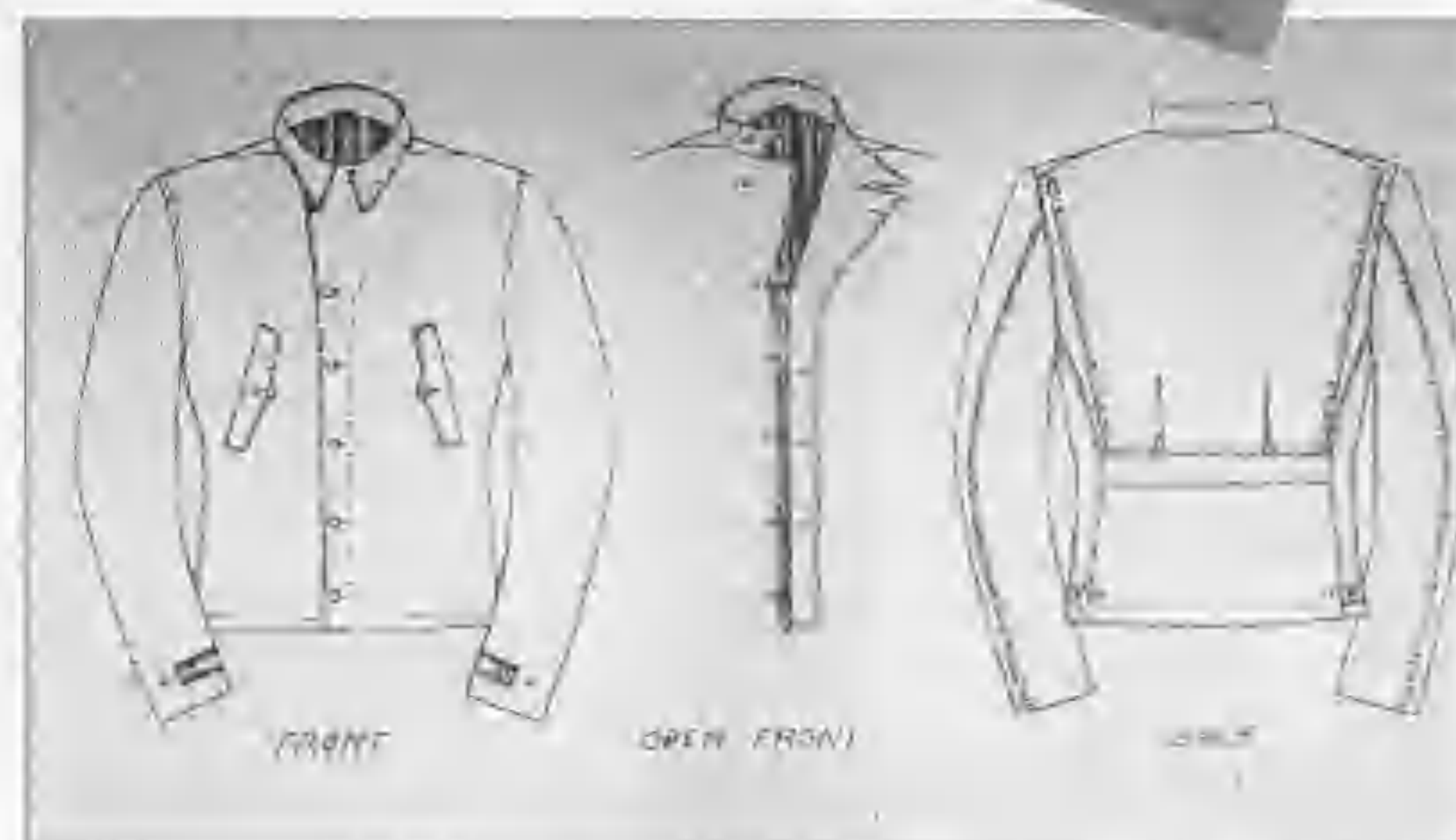
hold their equipment. Since the jacket was to replace the enlisted-OD Blouse, it was intended only for use by enlisted men. This jacket became known as the 'Parsons jacket' after its creator.

After the Chief of Staff approved the design an initial specification was drawn up in August 1940, calling the jacket a 'cotton, flannel lined windbreaker'. This specification was followed by another with a more military title, the 'Olive Drab Field Jacket', issued by the Philadelphia Quartermaster



**Above:**  
*Olive Drab Field Jacket, Philadelphia Quartermaster Depot Specification No.20. This first style, manufactured during 1940-41 and distinguished by its pocket flaps and absence of shoulder straps, is often wrongly termed the 'M38' jacket by collectors. (All photographs courtesy the author.)*

**Right:**  
*Original drawing of the OD Field Jacket from Tentative Specification of Field Jacket PQD No.20, January 1941.*





Depot on 7 October, 1940. Both describe a jacket with two diagonal pockets, lapels, a belt in the back, button and zipper closure, and a flannel lining. An additional size was included for a total of six. There were no 'long' sizes, since it was felt that any alterations could be made by unit tailors. The first 15,000 jackets were made by the factory at the Philadelphia Quartermaster Depot in the fall of 1940. All others were made by civilian contractors. When the tentative specification was given a number, PQD No.20, in January 1941, this jacket was essentially the same as that described in October 1940.

This early version of the OD Field Jacket has sometimes been incorrectly called the 'M1938 Field Jacket', a garment which never existed. The term 'M1941 Field Jacket' is freely used by collectors but was never used officially at the time. However, it can logically be used to describe the second major variant of the jacket which appeared in May 1941.

Almost from the first the Olive Drab Field Jacket met with criticism. Even before it was manufactured, several officers in the Quartermaster Corps had decided that its appearance needed improving. They got together with two New York clothing magazine publishers and made a long list



**Above:**  
*An early PQD No.20 version of the jacket at the factory, 1941, with contract tags still attached. (NARA)*

**Below:**  
*Two GIs at the Amphibious Training Center in Florida, January 1943. They wear the two major versions of the field jacket: (left) PQD No.20A or 20B, and (right) PQD No.20. (NARA)*



of possible improvements to the jacket, some of which were eventually incorporated into later variants. Troops in the Alaskan Defense Command at Fort Richardson, Alaska, were dissatisfied with the jackets they received, many of which had been made at the Philadelphia Quartermaster Depot. General Joyce, the commanding general of IX Corps, was also dissatisfied with his jacket, one of the first examples produced. These criticisms, elaborated on by the Philadelphia Quartermaster Depot, centred on the belt at the back being too high, and the cut of the sleeves not allowing free movement of the arms. Unfortunately the design executed did not completely fulfill Parsons' hopes for a loose-fitting, comfortable jacket.

#### THE MODIFIED VERSIONS

Arm movement was aided by the addition of a gusset, or oval-shaped piece of cloth, under the arm of the jacket in the first major revision under specification PQD No.20A of May 1941. This version of the OD Field Jacket saw a number of other changes to the original design. Besides the addition of the gusset, an additional button was added to the rear skirt to give a greater range of adjustment to the tightening tab on each side; the pockets were

changed, and shoulder straps were added. This latter change recognized the fact that officers, as well as enlisted men, were wearing the jacket. Since it was traditional that officers wear rank insignia on shoulder straps the straps became necessary. Previously, civilian firms made field jackets meeting the PQD No.20 specification but with the addition of shoulder straps for this eventuality. Such jackets were sold to officers, and had commercial tags usually reading 'officer's jackets', not a contract label.

Another major change in PQD No.20A was the removal of the flaps on the pockets. The Army thought them unnecessary as most soldiers wore the jacket with these flaps shoved inside the pockets. Their removal would smarten the jacket's appearance and make it cheaper to produce. The number of sizes available for the jacket were increased to 12 with the addition of 'long' sizes.

The next change in the specification for the jacket was not made until March of 1942. These changes, found in specification PQD No.20B, were minor when compared to the previous model. The shoulder strap changed slightly: a stitched seam which had run across the strap about 1 1/2 in. from the shoulder seam was eliminated. The presence of this seam is the simplest way to tell a PQD No.20A jacket from a PQD No.20B. Starting in March 1942, all men entering the Army received the new version of the jacket as a part of their basic clothing issue. Before this date only selected units received it, e.g. many members of the 5th Armored Division upon its activation in the fall of 1941. The PQD No.20B was the final version of the Olive Drab Field Jacket, produced until 1943, when it was cancelled.

#### Variants and markings

Jackets themselves were not always identical, even when manufactured to the same specification. The materials used in manufacture were always listed in the specification issued by the Philadelphia Quartermaster Depot with the notation that 'acceptable substi-



Novelist Ernest Hemingway (right), serving as a war correspondent in Northern France, July 1944 — note War Correspondent patch on left shoulder. He wears a PQD No.20B field jacket, the GI driver (centre) wears the Winter Combat Jacket, and Life Magazine photographer Robert Capa (left) wears an early issue of the M43 Field Jacket. (NARA)



tutes' could be used if necessary. The variations in zippers, pocket linings and buttons found on jackets are the result of the expedients used by manufacturers to meet Army requirements and deal with wartime shortages. By late 1940 the specified windproof cotton cloth used to make the jacket — called 'Byrd cloth' after Admiral Byrd, the Arctic explorer — was in short supply. The PQD allowed the substitution of a poplin cloth with similar properties. The wool flannel lining called for in the original specification was always very hard for manufacturers to obtain in sufficient quantities. In fact much of the material used in lining many of the earliest jackets produced came from the Civilian Conservation Corps, a uniformed civilian service which was part of the New Deal in the late 1930s. When this supply was exhausted 95 per cent wool material was accepted as a substitute, and will be found in most examples of this field jacket.

Every jacket produced has a manufacturer's label sewn in the right pocket. Most of the 23,000,000 jackets made by civilian contractors have a tag displaying the contractor's name, contract date, PQD specification number, stock number, and QM office ordering the jacket. The stock number was used by the Quartermaster Corps to facilitate the ordering of these jackets by Army units, since each size had a separate stock number. The tags of PQD No.20B field jackets had 'Jackets, Field' added above the contractor's name on the tag.

#### THE JACKET IN USE

The OD Field Jacket continued to attract criticism from both Army authorities and soldiers throughout its life. In December 1941 soldiers of the

65th Artillery Brigade, who often rode in trucks, complained that the jacket would fit better when worn in a sitting position if the collar were removed. The removal of the pocket flaps in May 1941 distressed many soldiers in the V Corps area, since it allowed items in their pockets to fall out:

the contents also became wet easily. When the jacket was used in combat for the first time, in North Africa in late 1942, the criticisms multiplied. It was originally intended to be used in conjunction with the raincoat and overcoat; however, neither of these were used extensively in combat as they

were inconveniently cumbersome. In these circumstances the OD Field Jacket became one of the basic coats for soldiers in the field, a function for which it was not designed. Obviously, in such conditions the soldiers found it to be neither warm nor dry enough. Its then-unique appearance was noteworthy during the North African fighting. While returning to a headquarters at night during the German attack at Tebourba in December 1942, a group of Army photographers encountered unidentified troops at a road junction. The presence of German paratroopers in the area had made everyone suspicious, and a firefight was only avoided when the soldiers on the road were identified as Americans by the distinctive cut of their field jackets and helmets.

The performance of the jacket in the field was studied by the Quartermaster Corps during the North African campaign. A major who served with the first two tank destroyer battalions to serve overseas, most likely to 601st and 701st TD Battalions, observed that there were many complaints about the field jack-



Rear of PQD No.20B jacket, with a third adjustment button for the rear hip tab added each side.





et from the troops. Not only did he report it as unsatisfactory because it was both too short and not warm enough, he also criticized it for its 'sloppy' appearance. When possible, numbers of American troops wore British battledress blouses in North Africa, since they felt it was warmer and more practical than the OD Field Jacket. Those GIs who could get neither the warmer Winter Combat Jacket (also known as the 'Tanker's Jacket') or a battledress blouse often demonstrated their resourcefulness by emulating the American hobo: they lined their field jackets with newspaper to keep warm, both in North Africa and during the first winter in Italy. Zippers tended to break easily in the field, adding to the GI's discomfort.

As always in the field, the jacket was hard to keep clean, and the colour faded easily when laundered. Their light OD colour not only made cleaning more difficult but also made soldiers more conspicuous than the later, more darkly coloured M1943 field jackets. Clean field jackets amongst infantry units were usually taken as a sign of replacement troops. A 1st Division medic recalled that when replacements arrived in Normandy soon after the invasion they were easily recognized as such by the new and clean appearance of their field jackets. Cuffs, collars and pockets also frayed easily when washed under field conditions. Any collector will be familiar with the M41 jacket with a badly frayed collar which

#### Above:

Shoulder strap detail, PQD No. 20B jacket; the only difference between this and the 20A type is the absence here of the seam stitched across the strap 1½ ins. in from the shoulder seam of the 20A.

#### Below:

Typical clothing tag sewn into the right pocket of a PQD No. 20B jacket, as explained in the text.



either needs repair, has been repaired with a 'zig-zag' sewing stitch, or has had the collar reversed. The latter two were both standard repairs by GI tailors. (The weakness of the collar was eerily underlined when in June 1979 the Editor of this magazine came across a torn-off collar still trapped between stones on Utah Beach, Normandy).

\* \* \*

The OD Field Jacket was officially cancelled on 15 September 1943, with the last batch of jackets having being ordered the previous April. However, it was still issued until existing stocks were exhausted, being termed 'limited standard' issue by the QM Corps. It was still in use as the basic field jacket by infantrymen in Italy in the winter of 1943-1944, although theoretically still in conjunction with the overcoat and raincoat. There was no readily available substitute. The much warmer Winter Combat Uniform was no longer being produced, and was still issued only to armoured and other special units. The Model 1943 Field

Jacket was as yet available in very limited quantities.

By mid-1944 the OD Field Jacket was still much in evidence during the invasion of Normandy. The extensive plans for Operation 'Overlord' included issuing either an OD Field Jacket or Winter Combat Jacket to every man in the assault force. In fact the ETO Quartermaster attempted to requisition all remaining OD Field Jackets in July 1944 as a substitute for the ETO Field Jacket, which was not yet available in sufficient quantities. (The ETO Field Jacket was in fact never used as a field jacket, but became the 'Ike jacket' service blouse.) The cost of the OD Field Jacket at this time was \$6.25. By the fall of 1944, with the appearance of the Model 1943 Field Jacket in the ETO, the OD Field Jacket was to be eliminated as a field jacket by most infantry outfits. However, the slowness of the ETO Quartermaster in adopting the M1943 Field Jacket as a replacement led to continued use of the old model by many GIs throughout the war in Europe, as evidenced by its appearance in many photos taken in Germany in 1945.

Although the OD Field Jacket was clearly not the best design for a combat garment, and was used in conditions for which it was never intended, its place in the history of military clothing is assured. Not only was it the first true field jacket, but it has become one of the most enduring symbols of the American GI of World War II. **MI**

#### Sources:

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**(Left)** Olive Drab Field Jacket, Philadelphia Quartermaster Depot Specification No. 20B — the second variant of the second major style, produced during 1941-43. It bears here the shoulder sleeve insignia of the 35th Infantry Division — the white on dark blue 'Santa Fé Trail cross' — and the rank insignia of a Technical Sergeant.

**(Below)** Men of the 1st Infantry

Division pose on a landing craft shortly before the invasion of Normandy, June 1944. Of the 24 men who can be made out in the whole area of the original photo, eight wear the Winter Combat Jacket (the so-called 'Tanker's Jacket') and the remainder 20A or 20B modifications of the OD Field Jacket. While the colour values of this wartime transparency are obviously distorted, the relative paleness of the jackets is noteworthy. (NARA)





## Military Miniatures

### The 11th Sévres International Historical Figure Competition

At any time of year there is really no place in the world quite like Paris, and to the military miniaturist the Sévres Historical Miniatures Competition is an ideal reason to visit this city. Indeed, the two-day event, held on 23-24 November 1991, was attended by a wide range of nationalities, from Italians and Belgians, Englishmen and Spaniards, to Americans and even Russians. The modellers who attended are all to be congratulated on making the 1991 Sévres Show a real success, and one of the friendliest and most gracefully run events I have attended.

Perhaps one of the most fascinating aspects of attending a show in a foreign country for the first time is observing how the event is organized and run. The space provided for the exhibitors, the hospitality and efficiency of the organizers and staff, the openness of the modellers attending, and a variety of other factors are critical in making or breaking a show. What struck me most about Sévres was the wonderful ambience created by President Jean Hanin and his staff. The hall itself was a lovely, well-lit room with high ceiling and sky-light, in which the figure tables were arranged in the shape of a large U, covered in floor-length green fabric. Each category table was separately lit by a fixture suspended above, and potted plants were arranged attractively about the room. In the background, classical music wafted softly over the sound system. The crowning touch was the delightful presence of show 'stewardesses' at the reception table, and assisting in various aspects of show administration. All were clad in hand-made medieval costume, and a few even sported buttons identifying them as English speakers, to help minimize the language barrier. I would expect that many of these fine innovations will begin appearing at American shows

in the near future.

The dealer area was relatively small, and mainly limited to French and Belgian figure and book dealers. However, such well-known manufacturers as Métal Modèles and Le Cimier were present, and there was plenty to occupy those with a bit of money to spend.

The actual competition was an historical period category system. Generally, there was plenty of space to display the figures entered in each category, and the spectators seemed to experience little trouble in viewing the figures entered. As always in such competitions, some categories contained a greater number of stand-out pieces than others, particularly the Coup des Coupes, which seemed filled with potential award winners. Unlike other category competitions, such as Euromilitaire for example, no certificates were given — only 1st, 2nd and 3rd in each category — so, sadly, many deserving pieces went unrecognized.

As for the quality of work on display, I found it to be quite good — particularly the work of such fine modellers as Jean Josseau, Jean-Pierre Duthilleul, Jean-Luc Georges, Hervé de Belenet and Christian Legros. There is a definite flair and sense of daring to the work of the French and Belgian mod-



Those who have managed to obtain the video of 'Son of the Morning Star' will find this image of a 'Trooper, 7th US Cavalry, 1876' by Bill Horan particularly poignant; it won the Trophée des Amériques at Sévres. (Author's photo)

ellers, and a real sense of enthusiasm comes across in their work. There also seems to be an incredible amount of imagination and ingenuity in the conception and execution of vignettes and dioramas by these modellers in particular. The well-known 'mushroom' style dioramas were few in number, and painting styles varied widely from the subtle to the exaggerated, but there were many pieces painted in strikingly realistic style. Many American and English modellers (myself included) can learn a great deal from these fine miniaturists, who seem eager to take chances on ambitious dioramas and complex compositions, while many of us tend to stick with the safe and well-travelled course.

Of all of the modellers at the show, the scratchbuilding and animation skills of **Jean Josseau** were the most impressive. Two of Josseau's vignettes were among the best animated and composed scenes I have seen in a long time; and his sense of anatomy — both equine and human — is simply superb.

**Hervé de Belenet** brought two fine pieces to the Coup des Coupes category, including an impressive 'Khmer War Elephant'. The obvious care and precision that went into the detailing of this fine model made it one of the most popular pieces at the show. By the time the awards were announced, the name **Jean-Pierre Duthilleul** was familiar to all, as he collected awards in a number of categories; his 'Pasha' was a particularly well realized model.

Of particular interest to those in attendance was the presence of Russian modeller, **Andrei Bleskine**. His scratchbuilt 'Russian Empress Life Guard' was an excellent piece of modelling, and hopefully Andrei will be able to attend other competitions around the world in the years to come.

An encouraging aspect of the competition was the presence of a well-supported Novice and Junior competition. Both categories featured some fine work, including a few that would almost certainly have placed in one of the advanced categories.

From Great Britain, such fine modellers as **Martin Livingstone** (two 2nd places), **Gary Joslyn**, **Gill Watkin-John** and several others were present on the



first day, but were compelled to leave prior to the announcement of the awards and subsequent ceremony on the second day. Sheperd Paine, Philip Stearns, Bill Pritchard (two Bronzes) and I attended from the United States.

Separate from the actual judging of the show, **Sheperd Paine** supervised an experiment in open system award selection. With the permission of M. Hanin, the show was judged using an open format as a means of demonstrating the type of results which can be expected in this type of system. The result was an award distribution of approximately 10 Golds, 25 Silvers, 30 Bronzes and 30 certificates. M. Hanin's kind co-operation in this 'test case' was most appreciated.

An exciting development at the Sèvres show was the establishment of plans to organize the **First Tri-Annual International Miniature Figure Exhibition** in the spring of 1993. Preliminary plans have been in the works for the past year as English, French, American and Canadian modellers have caucused on the subject. By unanimous vote, the first show will be held in the eastern United States in May or June of 1993 and will be run by an international panel of the world's modellers. More details will be released in the months to come on this subject.

Perhaps the best that can be said about this well-run show is that all who attended were made to feel welcome. To those considering a trip to next year's Sèvres show, I would say by all means — go! In addition to the obvious charms of Paris, and the wonders of the Musée de l'Armée, the Sèvres show is well worth the trip.

**Bill Horan**

*Military Illustrated* extends grateful thanks to Jean-Louis Viau of *Tradition Magazine* for his help in the preparation of this report.

## Military Miniatures Reviewed

**Benassi, 54mm:  
Sergeant, Italian Alpini,  
c.1942**

Julian Benassi has pursued a highly individual taste in subjects since launching his range of figures, and has certainly trodden paths uncharted by others.

His latest release once again selects a somewhat esoteric prototype. The *Alpini* were arguably among the highest quality infantry available to the Italian Army in the 1940s. Drawn from the Italian Alpine regions, the men were tough and experienced in the vagaries of mountainous terrain.

Although primarily infantry divisions they encompassed pack artillery and their own support units, and were by their nature capable of independent action if required. In many ways they foreshadowed modern specialist formations, and certainly qualify as an élitist, if not actually élite band of soldiers.

The figure is depicted at the salute in what appears to be 'parade' uniform. A simple casting, it consists primarily of one main piece with only the right arm and the *Alpini* eagle feather separate. A fourth piece is a quite substantial base, onto which the figure locates positively via a spigot cast on each foot.

The painting instructions are brief (being supplied on a piece of paper only 14cm x 9cm, they have to be) and include a rather smudged reproduction of the stencilled helmet badge, which could certainly have benefited from larger and clearer presentation.

Technically it has to be said that the quality of the casting is not up to the current state-of-the-art. The detail lacks the crispness that sculptors like Saunders and Horton achieve,



and the whole casting has a texture that would not be out of place on a full-size bronze. Anatomy and balance aren't bad, but scale is way off what it says on the box.

There has long been considerable ambiguity about the scale of figures in this general bracket. Some manufacturers hedge their bets by quoting '54mm/1:35' in the hope that they will capture two very different markets. The two terms are of course mutually exclusive, and the end result is invariably frustration for the vehicle modellers who find the figures overscale for their purposes. (There are of course honourable exceptions; for instance Roger Saunders' figures, notably his acclaimed *Hornet* range, are always precisely the size he says they are.)

The 54mm convention goes back to the Britains lead soldier days and was originally the height of the figure either overall or to the top of its head, depending on which reference you read. In recent years, and notwithstanding the historical position, it has come to be generally accepted that it equates to 1:32 scale — which is why such figures do not match the general run of 1:35 vehicle models.

The Benassi figure measures 62mm from head to foot — nearly 15% larger than the quoted scale. Put another way, if you take the 1:32 route this guy is 6ft.7in. (2m) tall: possi-

ble, but unusual in a mountain man of any nationality.

Clearly this matters not a jot if you consider the figure on a stand-alone basis. As part of a collection, however, he's going to look a bit big. In summation, an excellent choice of subject albeit executed in a rather individualistic style, which the collector will have to make his or her own decision about.

**Figure clamp; J.S. Millin,  
6 Arle Drive, Cheltenham,  
Glos GL51 8HT**

Something that the military modeller has been waiting for for many years is a custom-built stand to hold figures firmly without handling during painting — no more glueing onto makeshift bases or pieces of wood poised dangerously over a jam jar! The concern that has answered many prayers by producing a simple yet effective figure clamp is J.S. Millin of Cheltenham.

Consisting of a wooden base covered in green baize with a stainless steel pin encased in wood extending from the centre to act as a handle, the clamp has a metal plate working head measuring 100mm x 45mm. This plate is screwed onto the handle and the figure held in place by two clamps adjusted by an Allen key provided for the purpose. The clamp holds standing figures mounted on bases up to 6mm deep and can, if necessary, accommodate two figures at a time.

The secured figure can be moved in any direction for painting, and our exhaustive tests recorded no movement whatsoever. Positioned on the clamp pin, the figure can easily be rotated through 360 degrees. Ideal for the larger size of figure, the clamp is not intended for those as small as 54mm, although this problem can be overcome simply by attachment to a larger working base which the clamp will hold.

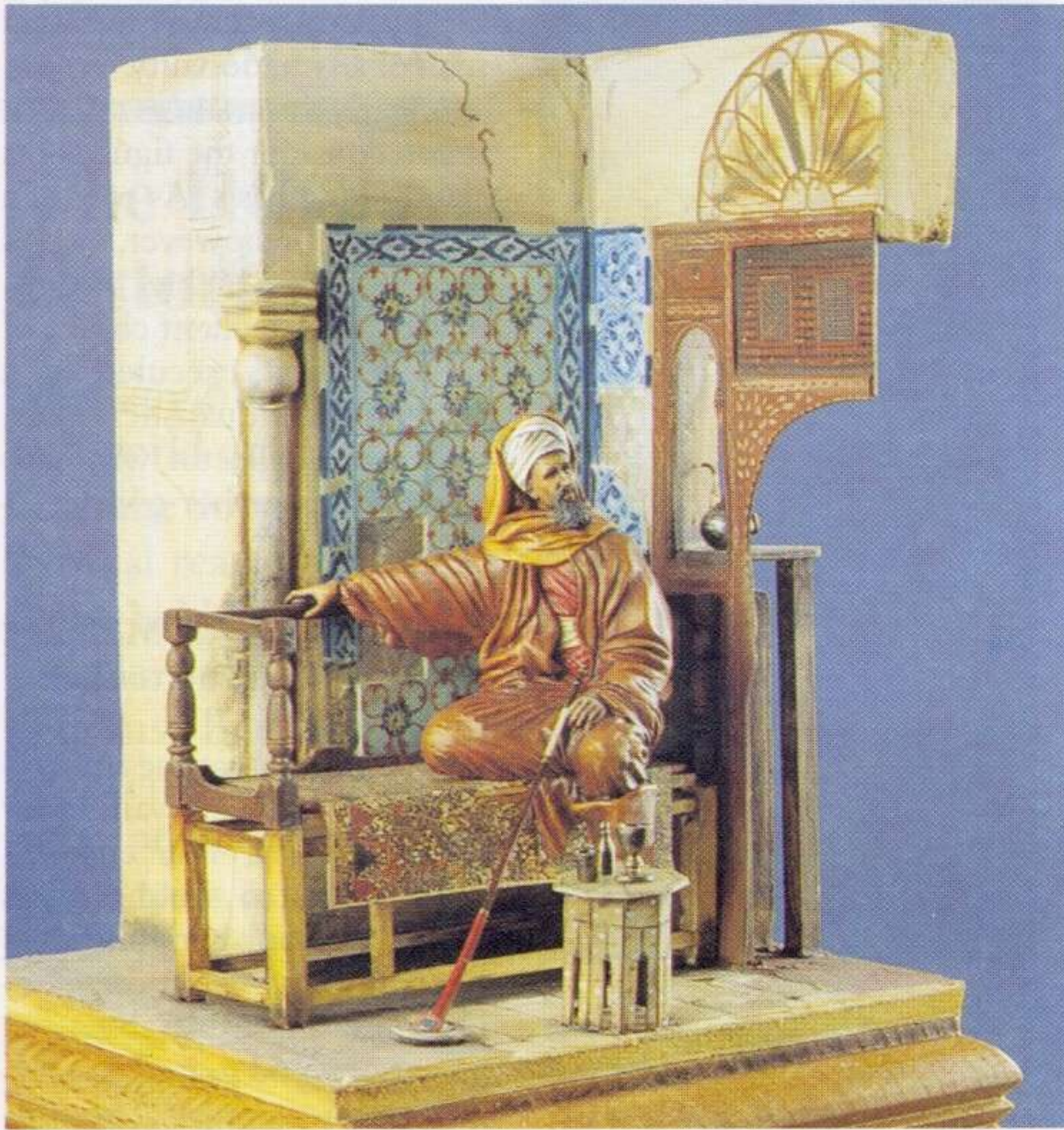
The figure clamp itself retails at £11 and the base is £4.50, plus 10% post and packing. We understand that J.S. Millin is currently working on a larger size version of the clamp to support a mounted figure.



# Sèvres 1991

## Historical Figure Competition

See Bill Horan's report on previous pages.



**Left:**  
*'The Pasha'* by Jean-Pierre Duthilleul won a 1st in the Trophée Civil category at Sèvres, and is a fine example of the flair and imagination of many of the vignettes and dioramas entered. (J-L Viau)

**Below left:**

Hervé de Belenet's splendidly presented 'Khmer War Elephant' was placed 2nd in the Coup des Coupes category, the ground work — if such a pedestrian term applies here — drawing as many admirers as the beast itself. (J-L Viau)

**Below right:**

'Knight of the Golden Fleece' by Philippe Gengembre won 1st Prize in the Trophée Jeanne d'Arc category.







**Above left:**  
'Russian Guard Cossack' by the visiting Russian modeller Andrei Bleskine was not in competition. (J-L Viau)



**Above centre:**  
Bill Horan's 'Private, 146th NY Vol. Inf., 1864' placed 1st in the Trophée Garance. (Author's photo)



**Above right:**  
'Highland Clansman' by Bill Horan also won 1st Prize in the Trophée Turenne. (Author's photo)

**Right:**  
The extraordinary animation skills of Jean Josseau; that his 'Egypt, 1799' only placed 3rd in the Coup des Coupes category gives some idea of the general standard at this show. (J-L Viau)

#### Feature figures

Readers wishing to model figures based on subjects featured in articles in this issue may find the following suggestions helpful, though far from comprehensive; conversion will often be necessary.

Roman legionaries, second half of 1st century AD: Sovereign — Three different castings (75mm).

US 'GI', WW2: Hussar — Infantryman 1943-45 (90mm); Ara — Infantryman (1:35)

Henry VIII's Army: MilArt — English soldier, c.1513 (80mm)

Badajoz: Many Napoleonic, and obvious Historex conversions, including: Chota Sahib — Officer, 43rd Lt.Inf. (75mm); Almond — Sgt., 95th Rifles, and Private kneeling (both 90mm); Sgt., 53rd Lt.Inf. 1815 (90mm).

1770s Rifleman: Hussar — American Colonial Rifleman, c.1740-80 (90mm).

Gallery: Hussar — Officer, Royalist Horse (90mm).





# The English Soldier of 1544

PAUL CORNISH  
Painting by ANGUS McBRIDE

In the summer of 1544 an English army numbering in excess of 32,000 men was landed at Calais. Its object, with the assistance of some 10,000 auxiliaries and mercenaries, was to invade France. This mighty host was of a size unprecedented in English history, being three or four times as large as the victorious armies of Crécy and Agincourt. That its achievements were less dramatic does not rob it of real technical interest.

Plans for this expedition had been maturing since early in 1543, when Henry VIII had entered into an alliance with the Emperor Charles V. Each of these two monarchs was to field a similarly huge army, with the intention of making a two-pronged attack on Paris. It is unlikely, however, that Henry VIII ever viewed the French capital as an attainable goal. Even before his arrival at Calais on 15 July 1544 the king appears to have narrowed his aims to the capture of towns adjacent to the English 'Pale' around Calais.

## RECRUITMENT AND ORGANIZATION

The English (or indeed Welsh) soldier who embarked upon this 'Enterprise of Paris' was something of an oddity in contemporary terms, for England did not have a large class of professional or semi-professional soldiers from which to recruit. Much reliance was placed on what can only be termed a militia, mustered under obligations dating back to Anglo-Saxon times. In time of war this potentially huge force was augmented by companies of men raised by gentlemen or nobles acting under royal commission.

Similar types of recruitment did exist in Europe, but continental rulers had for many years based their military power on standing forces of

professional troops, augmented with mercenaries employed for specific campaigns. England's only equivalent to the *Tercios*, *Compagnies d'Ordonnance*, *Landsknechte* and their ilk were the 'crews', who manned the garrison towns and castles of Berwick and the 'Pale'.

Not only did England lack a large body of experienced soldiery; she was also astonishingly backward in the field of organization. Daniel Barbaro, a Venetian observer writing in 1551, described English tactical units as follows:

'Their infantry is divided into companies of 100 men, who have their captain, lieutenant, ensign and serjeant... The cavalry is also divided into squadrons of 100, and officered in like manner. The cavalry use trumpets, the infantry use drums.'

While individual contingents could vary widely in size, brigading together or sub-division was employed to ensure that the 100-man unit was standard. The next level of organization was the 'Ward' — nothing other than a continuation of the medieval practice of dividing the army into three 'Battles': 'Vaward' or 'Vanguard', 'Battle', and 'Rearward'. This system appears to have been used throughout Henry VIII's reign more as an administrative convenience than as a battlefield formation; indeed, in 1544 the three wards were not employed together. The



Contemporary drawing of an English man-at-arms, possibly meant to represent King Henry VIII himself. He appears to be wearing simple field armour rather than tilt armour. The horse is barded, a practice apparently common among English men-at-arms even in the 1540s. Note the red cross of St. George painted on the armour at chest and shoulder. Compare this image with colour plate figure A. (Courtesy the Trustees of the British Library)

Vaward and Rearward (13,000 men each), under the Duke of Norfolk and Lord Russell respectively, marched south to invest Montreuil. The Battle (16,000 men), commanded by the Duke of Suffolk and the king himself, laid siege to Boulogne.

The lack of any intermediate unit between Ward and company stands in sharp contrast to contemporary continental practice. The 1530s had witnessed the development of the Spanish *Tercio* (3,000 men) and the establishment of the French 'Legions' (6,000 men). Meanwhile the German *Landsknechte*, numbers of whom served in all of Henry VIII's wars against France, were firmly based on companies of 400 formed into 4,000-man regiments. Despite the English king's well-known interest in military innovations, it would appear that he failed to take account of these developments; he certainly did nothing to implement them in England.

## Uniforms

Once the English soldier had joined his company, his needs would to a large extent be provided for by the exchequer. In advance of his pay he would be provided with 'conduct money', to see him across to France. More significantly, he would be given 'coat money'

which which to buy clothing of an approved pattern. The campaign of 1544 is of singular importance in this respect, in that not until the 18th century would uniform again be issued on such a scale.

The three huge Wards were to wear a common pattern of clothing. The most complete set of dress regulations to have survived are those laid down for the Vaward:

'First, every man sowdyer to have a cote of blew clothe, after suche fashion as all footmens cotes be made here in London to serve his majestie in this journey, and that the same be garded with red clothe, after such sorts as the others be made here. And the best sene to be trymmed after such sort as shall please the captayne to devise.' (Other sources indicate that the left sleeve was red).

'Provided alwayes that noe gentleman nor other wear any manner of silk uppon the garde



of his coate, save only upon his lefte sleeve, and that no yeoman wear any manner of silke upon his saide coate; nor noe gentleman, nor yeoman to wear any manner of badge.

'Item, every man to provide a payer of hose for every of his men, the right hose to be all red and the lefte to be blew, with oone stripe of three fingers brode of red upon the outside of his legg from the stocke downwards.

'Item, every man to have a cap to be made to put his sculle or sallete in, after such fashion as I have devised.'

The Battle was clothed in a similar costume of red guarded yellow, while the Rearward was garbed in blue and yellow.

Even foreigners in English service were obliged to provide themselves with coats of the correct colour. The Count of Buren, commander of 4,000 Imperial auxiliaries whom Henry VIII took into his employ, was informed that 'the colours given in the ward where... (he)... shall serve are blue and red.'

The adoption of uniform in this manner is certainly in keeping with early Tudor policy. In the wake of the Wars of the Roses, Henry VII had begun to impose restrictions on the maintenance of liveried retainers by noblemen. These restrictions were kept in force by his son. The prohibition of 'badges' in the above regulations is therefore of particular significance. The only badge authorised was the cross of St. George, to be sewn to the uppermost garment.

In previous campaigns companies had generally worn coats of a colour chosen by their commanders. If livery colours were not used, white was the traditional and popular choice. When coats were being paid for from the public purse, or when a captain wished to ingratiate himself with the king, green could be coupled with the white to provide coats in the livery colours of the Tudor family. It is interesting that in 1544 Henry VIII eschewed the use of this dynastic livery in favour of the colours of the Royal Arms of England: *Gules, Azure, and Or*.

*Soldiers not fortunate enough to be equipped with plate armour would commonly have worn 'jacks' similar to this example, which probably post-dates 1544 but clearly shows the method of construction: numerous small steel plates were secured by cord stitched through the woollen canvas exterior. (Courtesy the Trustees of the British Museum)*

## Flags

The flags carried by English troops appear to have been similarly bereft of badges or other insignia. Those represented in contemporary pictures employ variations of the cross of St. George, often combined with bars or stripes. In contrast to the uniforms, however, English flags did make use of the Tudor green and white, notably in the aforementioned stripes and bars.

Once again, uniformity was extended to foreign contingents. The German captain Landenberg, one of 6,200 mercenaries engaged by Henry VIII, is recorded as having provided his men with 'banners of white and green with red crosses'. His horsemen added



the Royal Arms to the centre of the red cross.

The near-contemporary murals at Cowdray House in Sussex, which now survive only in the form of engraved copies, show an assortment of flags, mainly of the type described above. Two, however, closely associated with the figure of the king, are worthy of further comment. One is a 'swallow-tailed' standard charged with a single crowned lion *passant guardant* surrounded by *fleurs des lys*. The other is a rectangular banner bearing a representation of St. George and the Dragon. A banner of green *sarcenet*, fringed in green and white and bearing a picture of St. George, is mentioned in English military use as early as 1511.

## Camp Life

In the first week of July, Norfolk and Russell arrived at the town of Montreuil and attempted to lay siege to it. Unfortunately the two English lords and their Imperialist colleagues could not agree on dispositions which would ensure the complete investment of the town. Russell accused Norfolk







**Angus McBride's reconstructions opposite:**

**(A) A mounted gentleman.**

This officer wears a suit of German armour dating from the 1540s, based on an example preserved in the Tower of London. His other clothing is based on contemporary drawings. As can be seen, the red cross of St. George is much in evidence, as opposed to any personal heraldic insignia. Red hennets were apparently regarded as a typically English form of military head-gear. His horse is shown here without armour, although it may well have worn it when actually in battle. Contemporary English commentators found the fact that their German allies did not use horse-bards worthy of note, suggesting that it was still, at this late date, the English practice to do so.

**(B) An archer of the Rearward.**

This man is simply equipped with a sallet and a jake, his uniform coat is worn over the latter. His other clothing, as befits a man of humble station, is not of the latest fashion. His shoes are based on a pair found on the Mary Rose. He carries a short sword of the hanger type, similar to an example in the Royal Armouries. This protective left forearm 'bracer' of boiled leather is taken from one preserved in the British Museum, bearing the inscription 'HIS [i.e. Joas] Helpe' in high relief.

Also shown is the method of packing arrows for storage and transportation. Stitched into each bag was a leather disc pierced with 24 holes, through which arrows were pushed (several of these discs were recovered from the Mary Rose). A bag formerly preserved at Canterbury, and recorded by the antiquarian Francis Grose, provides the evidence on which the rest of the reconstruction is based. The end of the bag through which the arrows were inserted was made of leather, presumably to protect the fletching. The arrows were withdrawn from the other end of the bag, after first removing a wicker mat which prevented the arrowheads from damaging it.

**(C) An Ensign of the Vaward.**

This man has been provided with a suit of Almaine. Examples of this type of armour are preserved in the Royal Armouries and at the Wessex Museum, Winchester. In this particular case tassets are not included in the harness (although they frequently were), but a gorget and 'splints' for the arms are worn. The plates protecting the backs of the hands are attached to the cannons by 'turning pins'. He wears a fancifully slashed version of the uniform coat (based on a contemporary drawing) over his armour, and a cap over his simple 'skull' helmet. The flag is taken from the Cowdray House engravings described elsewhere in this article.

of not conducting operations with sufficient vigour; meanwhile the duke blamed Buren and his troops, who 'will not in no wise lie in any quarter but near unto one of us'.

The experience of camp life would have varied considerably according to the social standing of the soldier. Men of substance, and those lucky enough to be attached to their households, could expect to sleep in tents, or even elaborate pavilions. The common soldier had to sleep in the open or improvise some sort of makeshift shelter.

Strict rules were laid down governing camp discipline, with the intention of maintaining good order and hygiene. During the campaign of 1513, and at Boulogne in 1544, the presence of the king appears to have ensured that these strictures were adhered to; at Montreuil, however, things were not so well regulated. Men constantly defied prohibitions on leaving the host to go foraging. More importantly, they failed to observe the regulations governing sanitation and burial of carcasses; and the spread of disease was the inevitable result.

One element of 16th century camp life was missing, however, just as it was from most English camps of the period: namely, the presence of large numbers of female camp followers. This was probably not

so much due to any innate English moral superiority, as to the fact that such 'light women' were prevented from taking ship to France.

**Supplies**

Without doubt, the main pre-occupation of the English soldier of 1544 was his stomach. English armies of the period were renowned for their reliance upon good rations. Another Venetian observer commented: 'In battle they show great courage and presence of mind in danger, but they required to be largely supplied with victuals: so it is evident that they cannot endure much fatigue'. The army of 1544 was lavishly equipped with mobile ovens, flour-mills and brewing equipment. These had to be kept supplied with raw materials, however, and although the host would set out with a fully laden baggage train and various livestock on the hoof, it would soon become reliant upon supplies brought up from a depot or 'staple'.

This system appears to have functioned smoothly enough at Boulogne. The camp at Montreuil, conversely, had its supplies brought in fortnightly convoys overland from a 'staple' at St. Omer. Norfolk and Russell were soon complaining of a shortage of bread, and of the fact that their men had drunk no beer for ten days, 'which is strange for Englishmen to do with so little

grudging'.

As the desultory and incomplete siege of Montreuil progressed, so the supply situation worsened, largely due to French interdiction of the convey route. The Welsh chronicler Elis Gruffydd, present at Montreuil, gives graphic descriptions of the shortage of food and its consequences, although he records that money 'was paid without question to everyone once a fortnight'. Much of this money was spent purchasing victuals from the people of Hesdin, who were given safe conduct into the camps for this purpose. Gruffydd also records, with due outrage, profiteering on the part of certain officers who had been able to acquire food from the well-stocked camp at Boulogne.

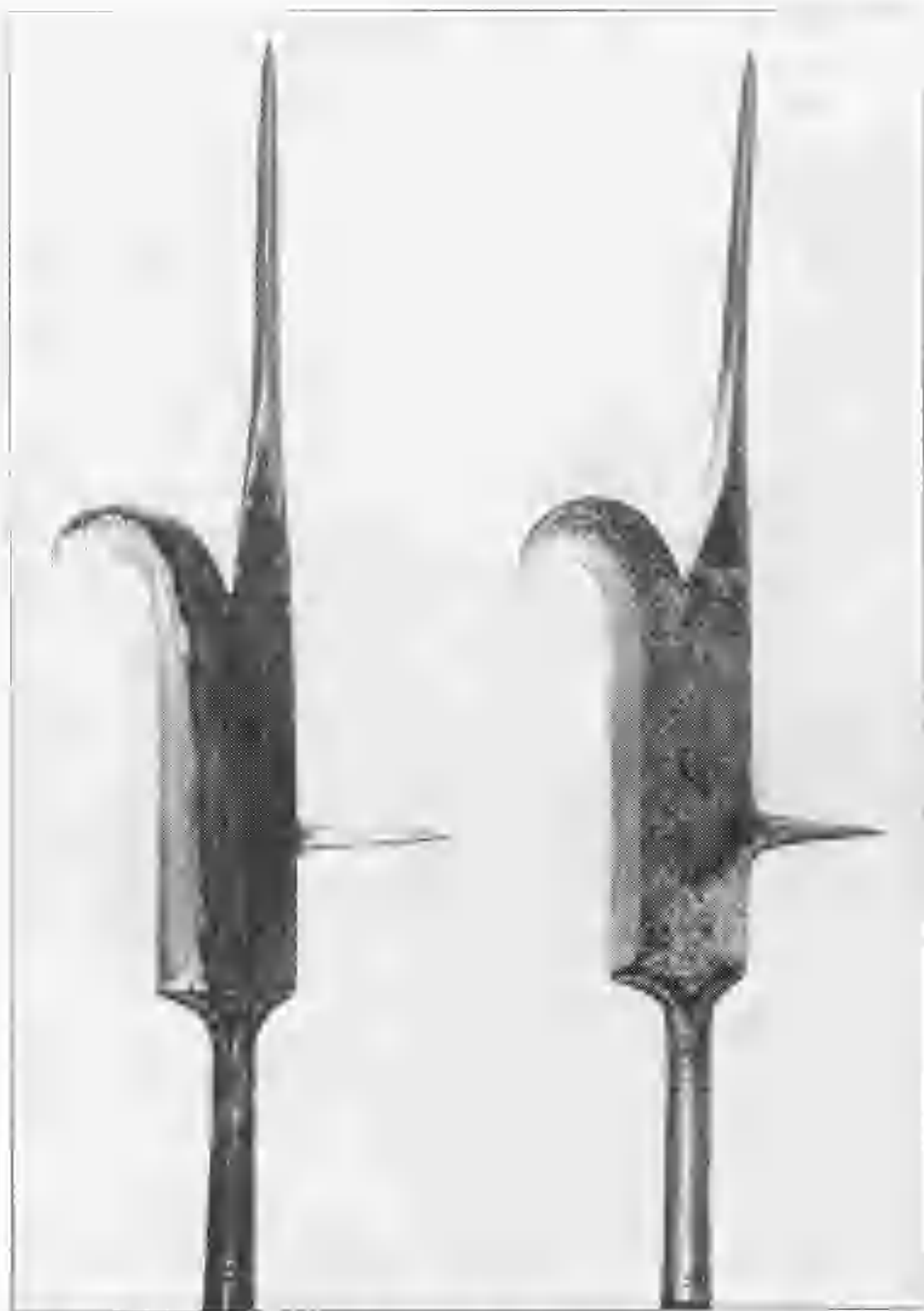
**Battle**

The movement of supplies from St. Omer to Montreuil is notable, in that it led to the

*Engraving, taken from a near-contemporary mural, showing the siege of Boulogne. In this detail the Lower Town and the Roman pharos known as the 'Old Man' are already in English hands. The mixture of troop types in the English army is clearly depicted: archers and arquebusiers at upper centre, billman and men-at-arms at lower right, and pikemen everywhere. Note, among the artillery at bottom left, a small cannon lashed to a much larger during gun, presumably to advance the enemy at a distance — a number of these appear in the full engraving. (National Army Museum)*







*English bills of the 16th century. These polearms were far heavier than their continental counterparts, which the chronicler Ellis Gruffydd dismissed as 'so brittle that not one of them could stand up to a blow from the hand of a woman'. Due to the point which was applied to prevent rusting (as also seen on much of the contemporary 'ammunition' armour'), they were commonly referred to as 'black' or 'brown bills'; these examples both retain traces of paint, although it is not necessarily of 16th century origin. (Courtesy the Board of Trustees of the Royal Armouries)*

other form of combat in which the English soldiers indulged on this campaign was siege warfare. Although some of the outworks of Boulogne were carried by assault, in which native English troops featured prominently, the siege work consisted mainly of bombardment and mining. The garrison of Montreuil was content to wait for relief. That of Boulogne, however, subjected to the fire of 95 guns and 50 mortars, and having had breaches made in its walls by mines dug by specialists from Devon and Cornwall, decided to accept an offer of honourable surrender terms. The garrison marched out on 14 September, and Henry VIII made his triumphal entry on the 18th.

#### **Arms and Armour**

It is no accident that Henry VIII's German hirelings should be used to escort convoys and that English troops should bear the brunt of the siege work. The English soldier of 1544 was far better employed in the latter role, rather than being risked unsupported in the open field, for in military equipment as well as organization England stood aloof from continental developments. Daniel Barbaro describes the four types of English infantry thus:

'The first is of archers, who abound in England and are very excellent, both by nature and from practice, so that the archers alone have often been able to rout armies of 30,000 men. The second is of billmen, their weapon being a short thick staff, with an iron, like a peasant's hedging bill, but much thicker and heavier than what is used in the Venetian territories. With this

they strike so violently as to unhorse the cavalry, and it is made short because they like close quarters. The third are the arquebusiers, who are good for little, as only a few of them have had practice south of the Channel; and this sort, together with the fourth, which consists of pikemen, has been more recently added to the ancient militia of England.'

The armament of the retinues taken to France by the gentlemen of the Privy Council bears out these observations. A breakdown is as follows: bills 1,073, bows 807, pikes 380, arquebus 181. In fact, the numbers of pike and arquebus listed here are apt to give a false impression, as such modern weapons would have been more prevalent in the retinues of these rich men. The imbalance between the numbers of bills and bows is typical of all English armies of the era. The difficulty in raising large numbers of archers was that the longbow required a tall, well-trained man to use it; the English bill merely required brute strength.

Because the use of the pike and arquebus was in its infancy in England, Henry VIII was forced to hire foreign infantry; pikemen from Germany and the Low Countries, and Spanish and Italian arquebusiers. The king was also obliged to look abroad to supplement the strength of his cavalry. Of the 32,389 effectives listed in the 1544 muster rolls, only 4,078 were mounted. English tactics were traditionally based on the use of massed infantry; English soldiers, even men of high birth, had become unaccustomed to fighting on horseback. As a consequence, little attention had been paid to the breeding of cavalry mounts. Another Italian, writing as late as 1557, describes English horses as: 'weak and of bad wind, fed merely on grass, being like sheep and all other cattle kept in field or pasture at all seasons'.

Thus limitations were imposed on the amount of cavalry which England could raise, especially men-at-arms, who required good quality steeds. A mere 196 men-at-

only field engagement of the campaign of 1544 which has been recorded in any detail. At the end of July a supply convoy was attacked by a force of 1,400 French cavalry near Lumbres. The ensuing skirmish was apparently witnessed by Gruffydd and is reported upon by the Duke of Norfolk. Gruffydd asserts that the French were able to take advantage of a lack of proper organization among the English and their allies. He is at pains to describe the ideal marching order for such a force: 'the footmen in order of battle and the wagons in two lines three deep on either side, as strong as a city wall, the artillery in front and behind them, with the two wings directly opposite the two arms of the battle'.

Instead Captain Hussey, the English commander, allowed his men to go forward 'like geese going to the corn everyone out of order'. The 'wings' of the force were too far removed from the support of the main body, and one of them, consisting of 800 *Landsknechte*, was

swiftly routed by the French horsemen. Hussey appears to have been something of a favourite with Norfolk, who fails to mention his ineptitude when reporting on the disaster. Instead he blames the 400 Burgundian horse — who, along with some English Borderers, were providing the cavalry component of the convoy's escort — for impetuously charging the superior French force. Gruffydd, however, claims that these 'strangers' were able to lure the French across the front of the main body where they were repulsed by arrows and arquebus fire (Norfolk says by 800 English foot with 'arrows and pikes').

After this sorry episode, in which the supplies, which escaped the ravages of the French, were plundered by the survivors of the escort, the 'staple' was moved from St. Omer to Calais, supplies now being ferried to Montreuil via Etaples.

Apart from some cavalry raiding (as far south as Abbeville in one case), the only



arms are recorded as being present on the 'Enterprise of Paris', 75 of these being the king's personal escort of 'Gentleman Pensioners'. More numerous were the 'demi-lances', who wore half or three-quarter armour, used light lances and, according to Barbaro, rode 'any sort of horse, as they never charge, save in the flank'.

The best of the English cavalry were the light horsemen; these were clad in mail shirts or brigandines and carried small shields and either light lances or javelins. Many were recruited from the border 'rovers' of the Northern Marches. Contemporary sources refer to them by a variety of names, some of which define their equipment and mode of fighting, e.g.: 'Chasing Staves' or 'Javelines with Targets'.

One area in which the

English soldier was fully comparable with his European counterparts was in his use of armour. England's indigenous armour-making industry was, as yet, in an embryonic stage. The output of Henry VIII's Greenwich armoury was sufficient only to equip the king and some of his immediate circle. Consequently most gentlemen were forced to import their armour from abroad. This was an expensive business, and, once purchased, an armour would often be worn long after it had passed out of style.

The use of plate armour was by no means limited to the gentry and nobility, however. Of the 90,131 members of the county 'militias' listed on a 1544 muster roll, approximately one-quarter are recorded as being 'with harness'. This would have consisted of a heterogeneous assortment of armour, old and new, issued in many cases from parish armouries.

Significantly, the regulations for the clothing of the Duke of Norfolk's Ward mention fustian or canvas 'arming doublets'. Evidently it was envisaged that these troops

would be equipped with plate armour, most probably cheap munition armour purchased on the continent. Throughout his reign, especially prior to each of his military expeditions, Henry VIII had made large purchases of 'Almain rivet' or similar gear from the Holy Roman Empire and Italy. That he was able to equip large numbers of his infantry in this way is doubtless due to the cheapness of this mass-produced armour. A Royal ordinance of 1542 sets the prices of two qualities of Almain rivet at 6s.8d. and 7s.6d., which compares very favourably with 45s. for a suit of demi-lance harness.

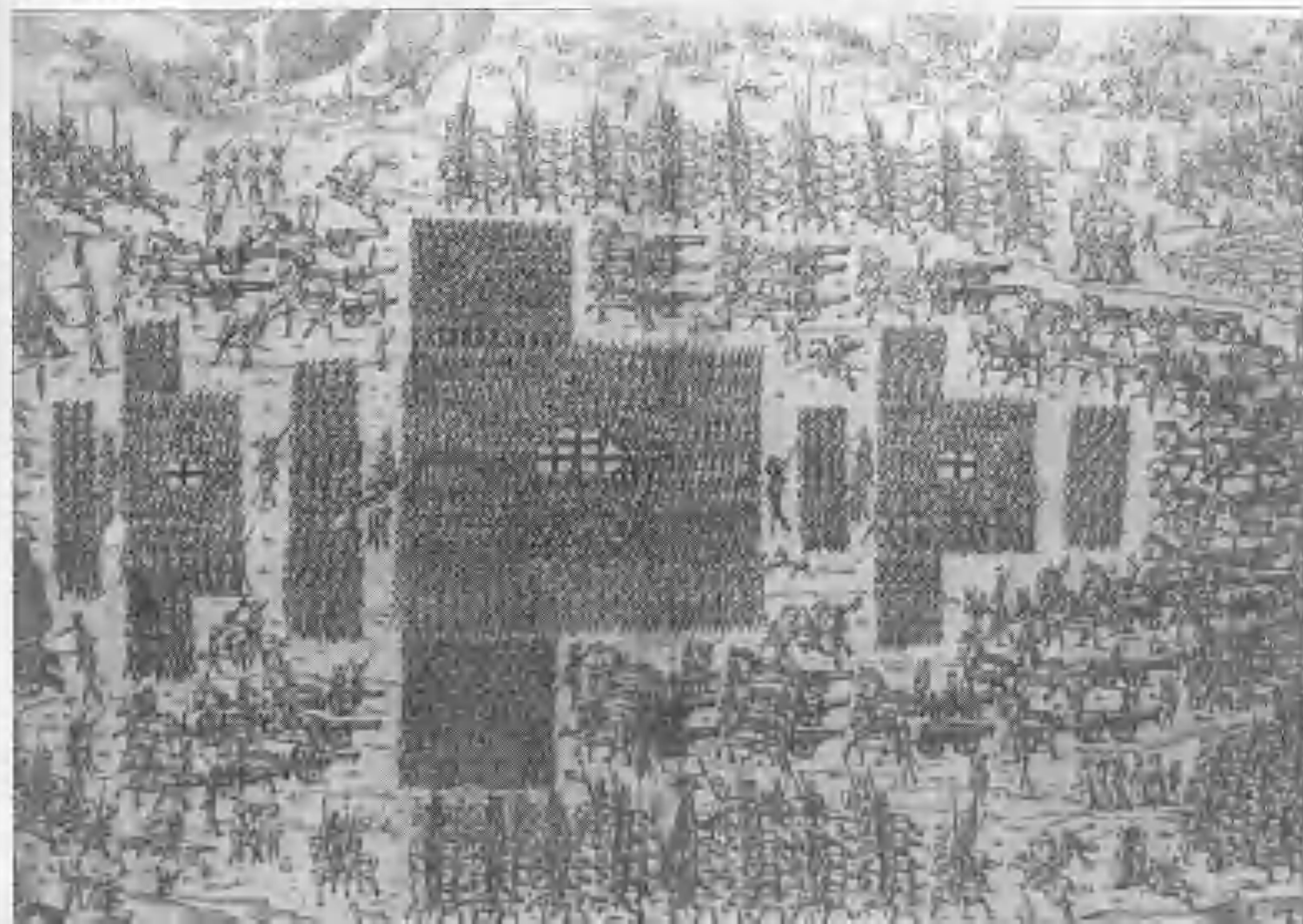
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On the same day that Henry VIII entered Boulogne, Charles V, who had spent most of the summer besieging St. Dizier in Champagne, signed a separate peace with Francis I of France. Large French forces were thus freed for use against the English, making the position of the force at Montreuil untenable. Henry VIII authorised Norfolk and Russell to withdraw their underfed and sickly army, sending the ordinance to Boulogne while

themselves falling back on St. Omer. With the king safely back in England, however, the two generals were only too happy to make a precipitate retreat all the way to Calais, via Boulogne. In the process, and to Henry VIII's fury, they denuded Boulogne of all but 4,000 men. Fortunately this small garrison proved sufficient to resist the French attempt to recapture the town by 'camisade' on the night of 9 October.

After lingering awhile at Calais, the remnants of the English army sailed for England before the onset of winter. According to Gruffydd, 'soldiers coming from Calais and Boulogne were dying along the road from Dover to London, and along the roads from London to every quarter of the kingdom, while trying to get to their homes... mostly people who had been in the camps at Montreuil, among whom both before and after there was the greatest pest that ever was among people'. Such was the lot of the English soldier of 1544. Six years later Boulogne was returned to France by treaty. **MI**

*A contemporary representation of Henry VIII's army on the march. Note units of longbowmen, forming the 'wings' of the various T-shaped infantry formations, which are interspersed with small units of arquebusiers. Armoured cavalry guard the flanks, light horse the van and rear, and on each side of the baggage train at right sheep and cattle are driven 'on the hoof'. (Courtesy the Trustees of the British Library)*





# Taken by Storm:

## British Misconduct in the Peninsula

IAN FLETCHER

In 1990 the 175th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo was justly celebrated in fine style at home and abroad, and the steady stream of publications commemorating the splendid achievements of Wellington and his army — which continues to flow unabated — has made him probably the most researched British commander in history. These achievements are rightly to be honoured; but with the 180th anniversary of the sieges of both Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz looming, it is time we looked back at the less savoury side of these glories, to what has often been a 'taboo' subject: namely, the ethics of a storming, and the reasons which caused an army of brave and resolute fighters to dissolve into a disorderly mob of drunken, murderous criminals. This topic is usually dismissed briefly and easily as being the work of the 'scum of the earth' element in the British army, resulting from a spree among the looted wine vaults and taverns in the stormed towns. The real truth is more complex, however.

On the night of 6 April 1812, troops from four divisions of Wellington's army stole forward in the darkness to storm the intimidating Spanish fortress town of Badajoz. In a horrific battle that lasted throughout the night, they struggled upwards over the bodies of their own dead to storm the forbidding walls defended with murderous proficiency by a courageous French and German garrison of some 5,000 men. After some of the most savage hand-to-hand fighting of the whole Peninsular War the town was taken, but at a terrible price; and there followed one of the most shameful episodes in the history of the British army, as the battle-crazed troops went berserk and sacked the town in an orgy of violence. Yet it was not the first time it had happened; nor would it be the last.

The three sieges and stormings which provoked these out-

bursts of savagery took place at Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz in 1812 and San Sebastian in 1813. The siege of Ciudad Rodrigo was the most effective of the three, with Wellington taking the town within just 12 days of opening trenches. After a siege that began on 8 January the town was successfully stormed on the night of the 19th, when troops belonging to Picton's 3rd Division attacked the Great Breach whilst Craufurd's Light Division attacked the Lesser Breach.

The second successful siege took place at Badajoz and began on 17 March 1812. The town was taken during the night of 6 April and was sacked with extreme violence for a full 48 hours after it had fallen to Wellington's men. The siege itself was a most unsatisfactory business, undertaken with poor siege equipment in appalling weather, and prosecuted as a race against the approach of a

French relief army under Soult. The main attempt was made by the 4th and Light Divisions, who made 'forlorn' assaults on the two breaches blown in the walls of the town while diversionary attacks were mounted by Picton's 3rd Division at the castle and by Leith's 5th Division to the west of the town. The attacks on the breaches, some 40 in all, floundered as the cream of Wellington's army was smashed against the insurmountable obstacles placed there by the tenacious defenders. These defences were so effective that the town only fell following the successful attacks by Picton and Leith.

The siege and storming of San Sebastian was quite a different affair, mainly because the storming took place during the hours of daylight. But when it did fall on 31 August 1813, the town was submitted to the same orgy of destruction as Badajoz, the havoc being made worse by a fire which left hardly a building standing.

What was it that caused Wellington's soldiers to behave as they did following each storming? The operative word is precisely that: 'storming', an event which had been rare before the Napoleonic Wars but which became frequent owing to a change in attitude by Napoleon himself. This change meant that many lives would be lost, needlessly by the previous centuries' standards, in storming besieged towns and cities. As significantly, perhaps, it meant plunder, drink and revenge, and an opportunity for Wellington's men to escape, if only momentarily, from the rigorous discipline of regular army life.

### THE CUSTOMS OF WAR

The change had come about when Napoleon decreed that no garrison commander should surrender a place without having first sustained at least one assault. This was entirely at odds with the practice which had lasted from medieval times up until the late 18th century whereby siege warfare had followed a somewhat conventional procedure: a besieging army would sap its way towards the

walls of the town before opening up a bombardment against the weakest part of the defences, and once a practicable breach had been made the beleaguered garrison would be summoned to surrender with all the honours of war.

If, however, the garrison decided to fight on and the attack was successful, it could expect little mercy from the stormers who would often have sustained heavy, and what they probably considered unnecessary, casualties. If a soldier had just seen several of his comrades killed while attacking a breached wall whose defenders could have surrendered in safety, it was inevitable that he would give vent to his anger. This was precisely the case during the Peninsular War following Napoleon's decree; as far as Wellington's army was concerned the garrisons of Ciudad Rodrigo, Badajoz and San Sebastian forfeited all claims to mercy when they chose to defend the breaches.

This was not only the British philosophy, of course. The French themselves had massacred part of the garrison at Tarragona in 1811; while Gerona escaped only because by the time it fell it had been reduced to a smouldering ruin and was riddled with disease. When Ciudad Rodrigo fell to the French in 1810 the town was spared only because the Spanish garrison surrendered at the very moment when Ney's troops were about to mount the breach, and even then some officers were forced to set about their own men to quell a short-lived burst of plundering<sup>1</sup>.

It is instructive to look rather more closely at the conduct of the army on these occasions before accepting them as 'just one of those things'. The sacking of these three towns was almost entirely the work of the rank and file, who considered their licence to misbehave as a reward for having successfully stormed these places. (Although it is interesting to note the number of instances in officers' journals of food and drink which suddenly appear, as if by magic, from an unnamed source<sup>2</sup>....) To defend those



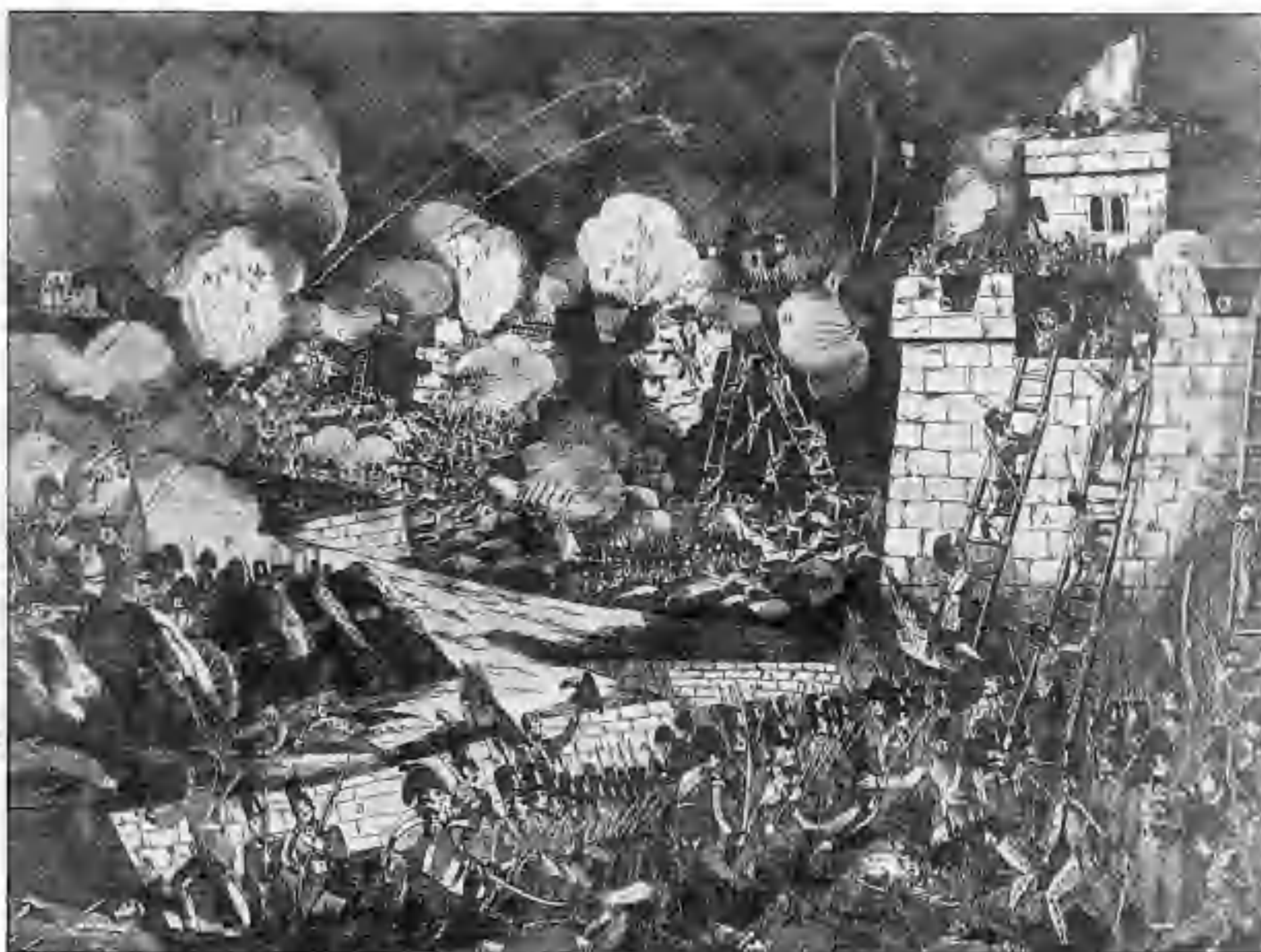
responsible would be wrong; but to condemn them without attempting to understand them would be equally so.

### THE BUTCHER'S BILL

Without dwelling too much on the shameful details, it is sufficient to say that all manner of outrages were committed by Wellington's men against the towns, their inhabitants, and even against each other as they fought over drink and plunder. And yet, in spite of heavy casualties sustained at each storming, it is remarkable how little evidence there is of atrocities committed against the defeated French garrisons.

It would be unrealistic to expect the battle-crazed stormers who had just gone through hell in trying to gain the breaches to simply 'switch off' once the town had been won. These were no ordinary battles: they were shocking, violent, concentrated actions which caused casualties equal to those of a much longer pitched battle. The details have been widely recorded and need not be repeated here. The defenders knew exactly which sectors to defend, and had days to fortify the breaches with anti-personnel obstacles and inner walls. Cannon, and strong infantry parties with many loaded muskets to hand, lay in wait. As the stormers struggled over deep ditches and up steep rubble ramps, placing ladders to gain access to the walls, they were packed tight and unable to avoid the withering fire from above, augmented with explosives and fire-pots.

The table below lists three of Wellington's major Peninsular victories, with their human cost; and a glance will illustrate just how shocking the stormings were by comparison. Talavera was a bloody affair that took place over two days: yet fewer British troops were killed outright than in the three-hour assault on Badajoz. Total losses at Salamanca and Vittoria — both long, pitched battles involving several full divisions — were also lower than at Badajoz. Albuera has passed into legend as one of the great slaughterhouses of the British infantry: whole brigades faced



the enemy in close-range fighting for hours on end, and the eventual victory was a question of bloody attrition; yet the total casualties — 4,159 including more than 500 missing — were not very much higher than those at Badajoz. One should also bear in mind that in a storming the dead and wounded were concentrated in a relatively much smaller area than at any of these open-field engagements, thus adding to the horror of the experience for the survivors.

Yet despite these slaughters in the breaches, and despite the clear 'customs of war', it was not generally the French who suffered, but the unfortunate Spanish inhabitants. Indeed, many French soldiers joined their British opponents in the plundering, and at Badajoz

there were recorded instances of French soldiers leading British troops to the wine stocks. This is interesting, and one wonders what the British stormers' attitude would have been had they been privy to a notice given out by the garrison commander, Baron Armand Phillipon, before the British assault: he ordered that each man should 'realise thoroughly that a man mounting a ladder cannot use his weapon unless he is left unmolested: the head comes above the parapet unprotected, and a wary soldier can destroy in succession as many enemies as appear at the ladder top'<sup>17</sup>.

Yet, although Phillipon's men must have realised that small mercy could be expected from the victorious survivors of their defence tactics (and there are reports that when they were

*A View of the Storming and Taking of Badajoz in Spain, on April 6th 1812' — an old aquatint which captures, however crudely, the main features of the assault. At far left is the attack on the San Vincente bastion; in the centre, the storming of the Crete and Lesser Breaches; and at right, the escalade of the Castle by Picton's Division, which eventually proved successful.*

marched out of Badajoz they appeared very apprehensive and edgy), there appears to have been very little summary slaughter, apart from among the Hessians who had been defending the castle. The same is true of the sack of Ciudad Rodrigo where, apart from a group of Italian soldiers who continued firing until the very last before asking for quarter (which was refused) the garrison escaped lightly<sup>18</sup>. This seems to have had much to do with the fact that there was little love lost between the nominal Allies; while, although they were enemies, French and British troops had respect for one another, and the latter chose to vent their anger on the unfortunate Spanish inhabitants instead.

### 'A PLACE TO BE MADE EXAMPLE OF...'

Badajoz, in fact, had long been a potential object of the army's revenge — ever since the

**Table of Comparative Casualties**

Stormings:	Killed	Wounded	Missing	Total
Ciudad Rodrigo	125	435	8	568
Badajoz	806	2855	52	3713
San Sebastian	675	1089	19	1783
Battles:				
Talavera	801	3915	647	5363
Salamanca	388	2667	74	3129
Vittoria	519	2956	—	3475

(Figures from Oman's 'Peninsular War')



Talavera campaign of 1809 when the British troops had been poorly received by its inhabitants. During the weeks when the rank and file sapped their way towards the walls in 1812, under terrible conditions, the sense of grudge would not have diminished. Grattan of the Connaught Rangers includes in his account a chilling passage:

'The capture of Badajoz had long been their idol; many causes led to this wish on their part... but, above all, the well known hostility of its inhabitants to the British army, and perhaps might be added, a desire for plunder which the sacking of Rodrigo had given

them a taste for. Badajoz was, therefore, denounced as a place to be made example of; and most unquestionably no city, Jerusalem exempted, was ever more strictly visited to the letter than was this ill-fated town'<sup>91</sup>.

It should also be noted that at Badajoz shots were fired by Spaniards at troops of Leith's Division as they entered the town; and it had been rumoured that townspeople had been seen alongside the garrison firing from the ramparts<sup>92</sup>. But while the grudge felt against Badajoz was certainly a factor, it is too easy to dismiss the sack with the notion that 'Badajoz had it coming'. Why, then, the dreadful scenes at Ciudad Rodrigo and, especially, San Sebastian, which saw the same brutal carnival of plunder, rape, and wanton murder as Badajoz?

**'The men were permitted to enjoy themselves...'**

The men who stormed the breaches, still in the grip of the killing rage that was the only force capable of driving them forward over such terrible obstacles, were released from

physical confinement as the defenders finally melted away in front of them. They rushed forward to disperse in the mazes of twisting, narrow streets which will have made such an impression on any visitor to these towns. Ahead lay drink, women and loot; behind them, in the charnel-house breaches, lay many of their officers and NCOs. They considered the town their just 'prize' — indeed, men of Picton's Division went into the assault at Badajoz in the knowledge that a senior officer had specifically promised them opportunities to plunder<sup>93</sup>. The prevailing culture clearly gave at least tacit licence, and can be gauged from the wording of various eyewitness accounts: 'The men were permitted to enjoy themselves for the remainder of the day'; 'Soon after daylight, the bugle sounded for two hours' plunder'; '...a little plunder was necessary to drown the horror'<sup>94</sup>.

At Ciudad Rodrigo such officers as did survive the assault could perhaps be excused for their failure to control their men. This was the

first time since Cromwell's men had sacked Drogheda in 1649 that a British army had stormed a European town of any real importance<sup>95</sup>, and, remarkable as it seems, nobody appears to have thought about the consequences of a successful storming. No orders or instructions were issued prior to the attack, and officers may have been taken by surprise.

Once inside Rodrigo the men dispersed in search of drink, loot, pleasure and destruction. It is characteristic of such occasions that much of the actual looting had a pointless, antic flavour: men capered in snatched-up clothes rather than seeking coldly for hidden riches. Seeing a column march out festooned with all manner of weird clothing, Wellington asked who the devil they were; the answer was 'the Light Division'.

At Badajoz and San Sebastian, however, the clowning accompanied scenes of real horror. Apart from the inevitable drunkenness, and the rape and murder which men perhaps tried to rationalise

*'The Storming of Badajoz by the 88th (Connaught Rangers)' by R. Caton-Woodville. Details of uniform are anachronistic, e.g. the Belgic shako, but as always with this artist the picture gives a striking overall impression of the action. Although the 88th Foot are featured, the bare-headed officer and the soldier waving a grenadier cap as he stands on the ramparts are supposed to represent Major Ridge and Pte. Canby of the 5th (Northumberland Fusiliers), traditionally the first men to gain the parapet.*







*'The Storming of Badajoz by the 83rd Regiment, 1812', taken from a drawing once on the wall of the patio of Government House, Gibraltar, made by Capt. Marshall of the 28th in 1870. Despite the obvious inaccuracies of uniform, this half-dragoon nevertheless brings home convincingly the savagery of the hand-to-hand fighting on the night of 6 April 1812, and seems to be based on eyewitness accounts of this kind of action. Note the tigerish grappling of the two men at centre left; the stormer wielding a hatchet at right; and the improvised chevaux-de-frise made from old swords and bayonets set in planks and beams and chained to make in the breaches, mentioned by several survivors of the action.*

as a deserved punishment for this 'hostile' town, there was also mindless destruction.

It is said that inside every army is a mob which will get out if discipline is not maintained. At Badajoz the agents of that discipline were, in many cases, dead in the breaches; and the remaining officers must have found it impossibly hard to keep track, let alone control, of their dispersed men in the chaotic night-time streets. Some tried; others, perhaps fearing for their own lives if they interfered, chose to avoid the frightful scenes, and returned to the camps instead<sup>(10)</sup>. The lurid crimes from which they averted their eyes were punctuated by the sounds of breaking glass and splintering wood, as well as by shrieks.

Elias Canetti has described the destructiveness of a mob as its most conspicuous quality; and writes that in destroying windows, pots, whole houses, in fact anything with which they choose to feel irritated they are symbolically destroying the bounds and regulations which normally keep them in check — the hierarchy which they no longer recognize<sup>(11)</sup>. Each battalion had its inevitable hard core of bad characters, who would instinctively take the lead in such situations, the rest following as night and chaos 'afforded a favourable opportunity for the loose and dissolute

characters which are to be found in all armies to indulge in every diabolical propensity'<sup>(12)</sup>. There were, of course, some battalions which managed to maintain a relative discipline; but the journals show that even in these the men often simply wandered away, even if only searching for something to eat or drink.

It would seem that on each of these occasions no amount of threatening could bring the troops to order, and that they only began to straggle back to their camps when they had exhausted themselves. The sack of Badajoz — which Napier said 'rather subsided than was quelled'<sup>(13)</sup> — lasted a full 48 hours. If we reflect on the normal aftermath of uncontrolled drinking, when the next day dawns and physical reaction sets in, then 48 hours is a very long time indeed for an army to be out of control.

#### COMMAND ATTITUDES

Wellington enjoyed — and enjoys — a well-founded reputation as both a disciplinarian, and a general who, by the hard standards of his day, was far from careless of human life. His reaction to these instances of anarchic barbarism is therefore particularly instructive.

Firstly, he recognised his troops' great bravery, and was grief-stricken when he saw the casualty figures. He was moved to write that Badajoz 'affords as

strong an instance of the gallantry of our troops as has ever been displayed. But I greatly hope that I shall never again be the instrument of putting them to such a test'<sup>(14)</sup>.

Secondly, he was resigned to the consequences of a storming, as being inevitable. After San Sebastian he said that he knew of no town so taken that was not plundered; it was 'one of the evil consequences attending the necessity of storming a town'<sup>(15)</sup>. Thirdly, his attitude toward a garrison that fought on after breaches had been opened was made perfectly clear in a letter to Canning in 1820:

'I believe that it has always been understood that the defenders of a fortress stormed have no claim to quarter, and the practice which prevailed during last century... was founded on this understanding. Of late years the French have availed themselves of the humanity of modern warfare, and have made a new regulation that a breach should stand one assault at least. The consequence... was... the loss of the flower of my army in the assaults on Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz. I certainly should have thought myself justified in putting both garrisons to the sword, and if I had done so to the first, it is probable that I should have saved 5000 men at the assault on the second. I mention this in order to show

you that the practice of refusing quarter to a garrison which stands on assault is not a useless effusion of blood'<sup>(16)</sup>.

Wellington was understandably dismayed by the misbehaviour of his troops; but his papers reveal that his main concern was that such outrages against the Spanish people not cost him the support of Spain as an ally<sup>(17)</sup>. He was also concerned about the bad effect of such episodes on the continuing discipline of his army; and was wary of the dangers of a defeated garrison making a counterattack while his men were distracted by plundering<sup>(18)</sup>.

He placed much weight on the ability of his regimental officers to keep control of their men, and thought that the dreadful scenes in the stormed towns would have been largely prevented had it not been for the high officer casualties<sup>(19)</sup>. Indeed, there is remarkably little condemnation of the rank and file in his despatches; though he lays blame on the NCOs for not keeping control — even for joining in the outrages — and attributes this to their low pay relative to the privates, urging Lord Liverpool to increase their differential to encourage them in their duties<sup>(20)</sup>.

Even so, Wellington must have known how difficult it was going to be for officers and NCOs to maintain control following a storming, especially on the second and third occasions; yet orders on this point do not appear until almost the last paragraph of his orders for the assault on Badajoz<sup>(21)</sup>. We



must suppose that his main concerns, as always, were strictly practical rather than moral.

Another aspect which Wellington felt contributed to the eventual misbehaviour of the troops was the inadequacy of the British army's equipment and preparation for carrying out the early stages of siege warfare — the absence of proper entrenching tools, and of a corps of sappers and miners<sup>(22)</sup>. His infantry rank and file were obliged to carry out all the digging: hated work, for which they were untrained, leading to unnecessary casualties and loss of time, and adding to their feelings of hostility against the inhabitants when they finally made an assault. The storming of Badajoz highlighted these

deficiencies, and led him to ask yet again for the necessary reforms to be put in hand: '... equipped as we are, the British army is not capable of carrying on a regular siege'<sup>(23)</sup>.

Although Wellington had a gallows erected at Badajoz there is little evidence that any men were actually hanged for offences committed following the storming. (The only executions were probably those of some deserters found in Ciudad Rodrigo.) Some accounts mention men hanging from the gallows, but many more say that it was merely the sight of the gibbet that 'sobered up' the rioters. Even Wellington's own orders on this occasion were hardly more than requests that the troops cease their plundering<sup>(24)</sup>. If he had been as outraged as is sometimes suggested, surely more men would have been made example of? — he proved on other occasions that he was willing to recall his army to its duty by the sight of soldiers twisting in the wind. He seems, in summary, to have been entirely resigned to the misconduct of his troops under these circumstances<sup>(25)</sup>; and though

he did not attempt to defend them, it is significant that he was to say, in Parliament in 1839, that though he had seen many towns stormed, none had been so badly treated as Birmingham following the Chartist Riots.

**MI**

(1) Don Howard, *Napoleon and Iberia — The Twin Sieges of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, 1810* (Tallahassee, 1984) 178–180.

(2) George Simmons, *A British Rifleman* (London, 1899) 230–231. Kincaid, *Adventures*, 68.

(3) Belmas, *Journaux de Sieges Faits ou Soutenus par Les Français Dans le Péninsule, de 1807 a 1814* (Paris, 1836–37) IV, appendix 369. Trans. in Sir Charles Oman, *A History of the Peninsular War* (Oxford, 1902–1930) V, 258.

(4) Sir John Kincaid, *Adventures in the Rifle Brigade* (London, 1830) 56.

(5) William Grattan, *Adventures with the Connaught Rangers, 1809–1814* (London, 1902.) 193–194.

(6) J.W. Fortescue, *A History of the British Army* (London, 1910–1930) VIII, 404. Walter Henry, *Events of a Military Life*, (London, 1843) 67.

(7) Joseph Donaldson, *Recollections of the Eventful Life of a Soldier* (Glasgow, 1825) 78.

(8) George Hennell, in Michael Glover's *A Gentleman Volunteer* (London, 1979) 17. Kincaid, *Adventures*, 69. Lt. Col. William Tomkinson, *The Diary of a Cavalry Officer* (London, 1894) 146.

(9) Fortescue, *History of the Army* VIII, 363. With no real effective force defending one can hardly place

Montevideo (1807) in the 'real importance' category. Likewise Buenos Aires (1806 and 1807) which, although a city of some importance, was devoid of any fortifications.

(10) Kincaid, *Adventures*, 69. Robert Blakeney, *A Boy in the Peninsular War* (London, 1899) 275.

(11) Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power* (London, 1962) 16–17.

(12) Lt. Col. J. Leach, *Rough Sketches of the Life of an Old Soldier* (London, 1831) 250.

(13) Sir William Napier, *History of the War in the Peninsula, 1807–1814* (London, 1834) IV, 431.

(14) Oman, *Peninsular War*, V, 255–256.

(15) Wellington to Sir Henry Wellesley, 9th Oct. 1813. *The Despatches of Field Marshall the Duke of Wellington* (London, 1837–39) XI, 173.

(16) Oman, *Peninsular War*, V, 260.

(17) Wellington to Lord Liverpool, 10th June, 1810. *Despatches*, IX, 225.

(18) Wellington, Memorandum for the attack on Badajoz, 6th April, 1812. *Despatches*, IX, 36, and Wellington to Sir Henry Wellesley, 9th Oct. 1813. *Despatches*, XI, 173.

(19) Wellington to Sir Henry Wellesley, 9th Oct. 1813. *Despatches*, XI, 174.

(20) Wellington to Lord Liverpool, 10th June, 1812. *Despatches*, IX, 225–228.

(21) Wellington. 'Memorandum for the attack on Badajoz,' 6th April, 1812. *Despatches*, IX, 36.

(22) Wellington to Lord Liverpool, 11th Feb. 1812. *Despatches*, VIII, 602.

(23) Wellington to Torrens, 7th April, 1812. *Despatches*, IX, 45.

(24) Wellington. *General Orders*, 7th April, 1812.

(25) Wellington to Sir Henry Wellesley, 9th Oct. 1813. *Despatches*, XI, 173.

Another lithograph after R. Caton-Woodville, representing Wellington's inspection of the breaches on the morning after the assault. He is reported to have been deeply moved by the sight of the heaped and mangled British dead (who were far more numerous than this picture suggests). The picture shows troops guarding French prisoners cheering their general — a stark contrast to the actual events of the previous night, when drunken British soldiers let off *feux de joie* dangerously close over his head, and pressed him to drink with them.





# The Rifleman: a Myth?

GERRY EMBLETON &  
PHILIP J. HAYTHORNTHWAITE  
Paintings by GERRY EMBLETON

It is a common misconception, among those with only a slight knowledge of the period, that the American War of Independence was contested by lines of redcoated automata versus buckskinned American riflemen, against whose sharpshooting skills the British were powerless to reply. The truth was very different.

The concept of using marksmen to single out the enemy's commanders is almost as old as the use of firearms, and examples of effective marksmanship occurred as early as the English Civil War. At Lathom House and Sherborne Castle, for example, the defenders very successfully sniped enemy officers and gunners, and Monck considered that each company should include six marksmen with 'Fouling-pieces' (sic) to act on the flanks and pick off enemy officers<sup>(1)</sup>; although perhaps the most famous example, the killing of Lord Brooke at Lichfield, shot through his open window, was achieved by an ordinary musket rather than by a trained marksman.

The enhanced accuracy attainable by a rifled barrel was known by at least the early 16th century, Germany producing the most prolific quantity of rifled weapons, initially used for hunting. (See 'MI' No. 33, p.34 et seq for some interesting early performance data.) In a military context the merits of a rifled barrel were accepted only gradually, for a rifleman had

perforce to manoeuvre differently from the linear formations of those armed with smoothbore muskets, usually taking advantage of terrain features for concealment. From this, there arose a common perception — often confirmed in practice — that the rifleman was very different from the ordinary soldier, a member of an exclusive élite. This extended well into the 19th century, as the following tongue-in-cheek report confirms:

'Mr. Grimaldi, of Covent-Garden Theatre, has been recommended, we understand, to

the new corps of *Yagers*, about to be raised, as their posture-master; having displayed so much ingenious ability in walking upon his head, standing upon his shoulders, crawling upon his belly, running on his back, and hopping on his knees, in the new Pantomime'<sup>(2)</sup>.

When the Minié rifle was introduced into the British Army, the Duke of Wellington insisted that it be called a 'rifled musket', or else 'the soldiers will become conceited, and be wanting next to be dressed in green, or some other jack-a-dandy uniform'<sup>(3)</sup>.

Although the removal of an enemy's commanders and skirmishers was obviously advantageous, by the value system of the 18th century 'enlightenment' it was believed essentially underhand or dishonourable to single out a particular target, no matter how valuable the destruction of that target might be. Frederick the Great exemplified this somewhat incongruous attribute. On one occasion he berated one of his own *Jägers* who was taking cover for 'behaving like a footpad', and ordered him to stand in the open and act like a Prussian.

Better known is his encounter with an Austrian

Pandour who was hiding behind a tree waiting to shoot at him; Frederick raised his cane to him, and made the Pandour feel so ashamed of this dishonourable behaviour that he lowered his gun, removed his cap, and 'remained in an attitude of homage until the king passed by'<sup>(4)</sup>.

The Napoleonic Wars furnished many accounts of the estimation of sniping as being unfair, not only on the part of 'enlightened' intellectual officers. Moyle Sherer records a conversation between some British soldiers, one lamenting the death of an especially gallant French officer: 'I was sorry to see him drop, poor fellow, said one. "Ah!" said another, "he came so close there was no missing him; I did for him!"'. "Did you!" rejoined the first speaker; "by God, I could not have pulled a trigger at him. No; damn me, I like fair fighting and hot fighting; but I could not single out such a man in cold blood!"'<sup>(5)</sup>.

## THE PENNSYLVANIA RIFLE

One of the most famous early firearms was the Pennsylvania rifle, derived from German hunting weapons and brought

American soldiers wearing typical 'rifle' uniform of a hunting shirt or 'frock' with capes and much fringing. The headgear is a form of light infantry cap bearing the inscription 'Congress'. Despite the caption stating that this represents an Accurate Vorstellung, it is clearly only an approximation. Despite the hunting shirt, the soldier has an ordinary musket (wrongly depicted with the lock on the left side) complete with bayonet. (Engravings by Johann Martin Will of Augsburg, c.1776)







to North America by German gunsmiths. George Hanger, a noted shot and ardent supporter of the rifle, described how on one occasion he was reconnoitering with the notorious Banastre Tarleton some 400 yards from an American position, quite out of normal range. The two officers were accompanied by a mounted orderly bugler three yards behind them:

'A rifleman passed over the mill-dam, evidently observing two officers, and laid himself down on his belly; for, in such positions, they always lie, to take a good shot at a long distance. He took a deliberate and cool shot at my friend and me, and the bugle-horn man... Colonel Tarleton's horse and mine, I am certain, were not anything like two feet apart; for we were in close consultation, how we should attack... A rifle-ball passed between him and me: looking directly to the mill, I evidently observed the flash of the powder. I directly said to my friend, "I think we had better

**Above:**

Opposing light troops in North America. (Left) American rifleman wearing a typical hunting shirt, with (top) a Pennsylvania or Kentucky rifle, with powder horn and shot pouch, and (extreme left) the 'Rifleman's Pike' or spear, designed at Washington's behest to equip Daniel Morgan's riflemen in 1777 to compensate for the lack of bayonets. About 7ft long, the pike hinged in the middle for ease of carriage, with a spring-fitting sliding collar to secure the joint when the pike was unfolded, a pointed ferule, and a sling. (The original pattern is reproduced in *The Book of the Continental Soldier*, H. L. Peterson — see Notes.)

(Centre) Representative British light infantryman in the uniform of the light company of the 5th Foot, including their distinctive leather helmet with scarlet mane and turban — cf. 'MI' No. 29, p. 10. (Bottom) The Ferguson rifle, with breech-plug unscrewed. (Right) Loading sequence of a conventional musket: biting off the end of the cartridge, filling the priming pan with powder from the cartridge, inserting the remainder with ball and cartridge-paper as wadding, ramming, and discharging. (G. A. Embleton)

**Right:**

Engraving by F. D. Soiron after H. Bunbury, published 1791 but showing a typical light infantryman's uniform of the late American War, including the short jacket and a typical cap.







**Above:**  
British light infantry officer wearing a cut-down jacket and gaiter trousers, carrying an Indian-style beaded and fringed ball bag, a powder flask, issue haversack and canteen, and an unusual sidearm; he is operating the breech mechanism of a Ferguson rifle.  
(G. A. Embleton)

**Below:**

An American rifleman in typical costume of 'round hat' and hunting shirt, a fabric garment which appears in a number of colours. The equipment is also typical, including powder horn and ball bag, haversack, large knife and tomahawk. (G. A. Embleton)







This engraving by C. Henning of Nuremberg bears a definite similarity to those of Johann Martin Will, although with additional details. The cartridge box would appear to emphasise the fact that these men carry ordinary smooth-bore muskets rather than rifles.

move, or we shall have two or three of these gentlemen, shortly, amusing themselves at our expence". The words were hardly out of my mouth, when the bugle-horn man, behind us, and directly central, jumped off his horse, and said, "Sir, my horse is shot"...<sup>(6)</sup>

According to Hanger, such marksmanship was not exceptional, as he declared that except in the presence of strong wind he would always expect to be hit by an American rifleman at 300

yards; at about this distance the noted Irish-American marksman Timothy Murphy is said to have killed Simon Fraser at Saratoga. Yet even in the American army the rifle was neither common, nor regarded as an especially valuable asset.

Although certain corps of riflemen enjoyed a high reputation (notably the troops of Daniel Morgan), the great majority of American units were organized, equipped and manoeuvred in European style. These used smoothbored muskets no more accurate than those of the British, and indeed, so inexperienced was the American marksmanship in the Lexington-Concord actions that it has been estimated that

only one shot in 300 took effect<sup>(7)</sup>. Despite Hanger's assertion, American riflemen were not invariably good shots: 25 fired a fusillade at close range at Lt. Col. James Webster at Wetzell's Mills on 6 March 1781, some firing more than once, yet not one shot took effect.

Of immensely greater significance were corps of light infantry, armed with smooth-bore muskets but skilled in the skirmish tactics often associated with riflemen. The British Army had gained considerable experience of such tactics in North America during the Seven Years' War, and attained a high standard of proficiency during the War of Independence. Against such

corps unsupported riflemen could rarely prevail, as Hanger explained when describing how Sir Robert Abercromby dealt with Morgan's riflemen:

'... The moment they appeared before him, he ordered his troops to charge them with the bayonet; not one man of them, out of four, had time to fire, and those who did, had no time given them to load again; they did not stand three minutes... They never attacked, or even looked at, our light infantry again, without a regular force to support them... Surely a corps of British infantry and good marksmen besides, need by no means be alarmed at the attack of a fry corps'<sup>(8)</sup>.

This exactly confirms Burgoyne's order of 20 June 1777 to his army: 'Men of half (your) bodily strength and even Cowards may be (your) match in firing; but the onset of Bayonets in the hands of the Valiant is irresistible... It will be our glory and preservation to storm wherever possible...'

Indeed, the disadvantages of rifle corps were recognized by the American military authorities: when Maryland proposed to send a rifle company to the Continental Army, the reply forthcoming was that the men would be of greater use given muskets, as there were already too many riflemen in the army; and that had weapons been available, most riflemen would have been re-equipped with muskets 'as they are more easily kept in order, can be fired oftener and have the advantage of Bayonets'<sup>(9)</sup>.

The commonest use of riflemen, in fact, was as a sharpshooting support for ordinary infantry; as Hanger remarked, 'Riflemen as riflemen only, are a very feeble foe... they must ever be supported by regulars, or they will constantly be beaten in, and compelled to retire'.

### THE FERGUSON RIFLE

Nevertheless, despite the rifle's drawbacks, the British Army did experiment with the weapon. In October 1775 a Foot Guards detachment practised with rifles at Kensington, but although their shooting



'made the thistles fly'<sup>(10)</sup> not one managed to hit the target. Nevertheless, orders were put in hand for the manufacture of rifles in Britain and the purchase of others in Germany; but a remarkable test of a new weapon caused these plans to be revised.

Capt. Patrick Ferguson (1744-80) of the 70th Foot invented a rifle with which he performed an amazing feat in the presence of Lords Townshend and Amherst and other generals, in May 1776 at Woolwich. In heavy rain and strong wind, he not only maintained a rate of fire of four shots per minute (rising to six per minute at one stage, and managing four shots per minute at fast walking pace); he almost always hit a target at 200 yards, and scored a bull at 100 yards lying on his back; and having poured a bottle of water into the pan and barrel of a loaded rifle, had the gun back in action, without having extracted the ball, in half a minute.

Even more remarkable was the fact that Ferguson's rifle was breech-loading, having a screw-plug at the breech end of the barrel, which was unscrewed by rotating the trigger-guard, giving access to the chamber from the underside of the stock. This was not a new idea: in Britain a similar system had been patented by the French engineer Isaac de la Chaumette in 1721, who invented the device at least as early as 1704, and a number of such weapons were produced by the unfortunately-named gunmaker Bidet. The action was easily damaged and liable to fouling, so no military application was made before Ferguson's improvements which he patented on 2 December 1776.

The Ordnance ordered 100 examples to be manufactured (by four makers, including William Grice, who had himself designed a military rifle); and Ferguson was given command of a corps of sharpshooters, drawn principally from recruits of the 6th and 14th, who were trained and despatched to America, together with a supply of green cloth for uniforms.

As part of Howe's army, Ferguson's unit formed the vanguard of Knyphausen's column at Brandywine on 11 September 1777. Before the action Ferguson had an opportunity to snipe George Washington, but declined, regarding it as 'not pleasant' to shoot at some 'unoffending individual'<sup>(11)</sup>. Although Ferguson's corps acquitted itself with distinction, he was wounded severely in the arm. With his corps thus deprived of his leadership, Howe dispersed the riflemen among his light companies; the fate of their rifles is unclear.

In 1779 Ferguson formed a Loyalist unit styled the American Volunteers, but there is no evidence to suggest that they continued to use the Ferguson rifle. Somewhat ironically, Ferguson (in command of Loyalist militia) was the victim of one of the few actions of the War of Independence in which very large numbers of riflemen were deployed: at King's Mountain on 7 October 1780 he was attacked by American irregular forces, colourfully described by Fortescue as 'rough, half-civilised men whom no labour could tire, and whose rifles seldom missed their mark'<sup>(12)</sup>. Ferguson was killed and his command was destroyed completely.

Despite the effectiveness of rifles on this occasion, it is not difficult to understand why no attempt was made to introduce the weapon on a larger scale (despite the fact that Ferguson's pattern had provision for a bayonet), although it is less easy to explain why so few riflemen were used as a support to the ordinary light infantry (largely German *Jägers* serving with the British). Apart from the inherent conservatism of the military

establishment, suggestions have been made that Howe was unhappy with Ferguson's corps because it had been devised by a junior officer and formed without his approval; but it may be that there were difficulties with the rifle itself. Certainly the stock was weak (having to accommodate the screw-plug) and liable to fracture, and it could not accommodate the ordinary cartridge; and a modern test on a reproduction rifle suggested another failing. In hot, dry weather, it was found that the mechanism became easily fouled and effectiveness declined remarkably (Ferguson's famous trial was conducted in cold, damp weather), which may suggest that it was not especially reliable under combat conditions<sup>(13)</sup>. Although the conservatism of the military establishment doubtless had an effect in the lack of perseverance with the Ferguson rifle, it is perhaps significant that in 1784, when the concept of a breech-loading rifle was again raised, it was left to Durs Egg to devise a new pattern (based on the Austrian Crespini), which may suggest that the Ferguson was not the war-winning invention which some have claimed it could have been.

\* \* \*

In British service, not only rifles but also light infantry were allowed to fall into disuse after the American War, so that in the early stages of the French Revolutionary Wars foreign troops had to be employed until light troops were again trained up to the standard they had attained in North America. The

rifle was not adopted again by a regular regiment until the formation of the 5th Bn. 60th Royal Americans, formed 1797; and only in the hands of this regiment and the 95th Rifle Corps did the Baker rifle become a truly devastating weapon, as testified by so many of the Peninsular War memorials. **MI**

## References

In addition to the sources identified in footnotes, the history of the Ferguson rifle and others is chronicled in the invaluable *British Military Firearms 1650-1850*, H.L. Blackmore, London 1961.

## Footnotes

- (1) *Observations upon Military and Political Affairs*, Gen. G. Monck (London, 1671) p.103.
- (2) *General Evening Post*, 22 January 1807.
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- (4) *Pictorial History of Germany during the Reign of Frederick the Great*, F. Kugler (London, 1845), p.372.
- (5) *Recollections of the Peninsula*, M. Sherer, under the nom-de-plume of 'Author of Sketches of India' (London, 1825 edn.), p.349.
- (6) *To All Sportsmen*, G. Hanger, (London, 1814), pp.123-24.
- (7) *The War of the Revolution*, C. Ward, (New York, 1952), p.50; see also 'The British Expedition to Concord', A. French, *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, Vol. XV, (London, 1936), p.29.
- (8) Hanger, *ibid.*, p.200; 'fry corps' is of course his phonetic spelling of the German *Frei-Korps*, i.e. irregular riflemen.
- (9) Quoted in *The Book of the Continental Soldier*, H. L. Peterson, (Harrisburg, 1968), p.43.
- (10) *The Craftsman*, 13 October 1775.
- (11) Ferguson's comment on the incident appears in *Biographical Dictionary of the American War of Independence*, M. M. Boatner (London, 1973), p.364.
- (12) *History of the British Army*, Hon. Sir J. W. Fortescue, Vol. III (London, 1911), p.328.
- (13) 'Return of the Ferguson Rifle', R. Carpenter, *American Rifleman*, May 1987.

'The Warley Heroes or The Light Infantry on Full March': a satirical engraving published by W. Humphrey, November 1778. In the Index to British Military Costume Prints, Army Museums Ogilby Trust (London, 1972) this is described as depicting 'Essex Volunteers'. It surely refers instead to Warley Camp, the scene of army manoeuvres, and depicts ordinary light infantrymen wearing the maned cap typical of the period.





# 'Few of the Officers Agree...' British Bayonet Carriage in the 18th-19th Centuries(2)

GRAHAM PRIEST

This article concludes the study of British Army bayonet scabbards and their attachment from the first recorded pattern in the early 18th century to the end of the Napoleonic Wars, which began in 'MI' No.45.

## THE NAPOLEONIC WARS

The Scottish United Services Museum exhibit (Seafield Collection) at Fort George, Inverness confirmed that some improved scabbards were used in early 19th century military service. Three hundred complete sets of accoutrements survived, originally purchased by Sir James Grant for the 97th (Inverness-shire Highlanders) Foot, Inverness Militia and Strathspey Fencibles during the Napoleonic Wars. The bayonets and equipment were unusual in that they were bought direct from the military suppliers without ever being approved by the Ordnance<sup>(25)</sup>. The scabbards were all slightly different in detail, but had brass mouthpieces integral with their suspension systems. The lockets had thin sheet brass extensions on the widest body face holding circular or oval studs. Some sheaths also had a concealed iron extension of the reinforcement within the leather. The tip of the thin metal strip was pushed through the body and flattened into a hook. This must have been intended to strengthen the load-bearing nature of the mouthpiece. Mouthpieces

without this improvement were simply glued to the leather and were thus likely to fall off if the adhesive failed.

The Seafield Collection scabbards were provided with decorative tooling on the leatherwork and many of the lockets had scalloped edges. Some of the external brass chapes were also decorated with incised lines, and a few were held to the leather by a small rivet.

A contemporary bill for 'Work and Labour Dun', addressed to the commanding officer of the Northfleet 'Volintears' in December 1798, priced '14 Scabots of Bayonets' at £0-14s-0d, illustrating that the unit cost had risen to one shilling (5 pence) each by this time<sup>(26)</sup>.

The Inverness scabbards were carried in a bridle leather shoulder belt. The bayonet



Member of Covent Garden Volunteers sheathing his bayonet, the socket towards the body: from 'Loyal Volunteers of London & Environs', T. Rowlandson, London 1798. (Courtesy P.J. Haythornthwaite)



Infantry Companies of the Honourable Artillery Company, drawn and engraved by P. W. Tomkins; Elizabeth Walker, 1803. Note the visible brass locket of the scabbard carried in a white waist belt frog. (Courtesy P. J. Haythornthwaite)

in form to the 1784 frog except that the belt loops were replaced by a permanently attached shoulder carriage. The cross belt was positioned by an adjustable buckle on the wearer's chest, and was also provided with a small loop on the back of the frog, intended to fasten over the left hip pocket button on the uniform. As the scabbards were stitched at the junction of the two shortest faces, and the frog studs were provided on the opposite

had its own frog integral with the strap. This was very similar

Foot Guard, from 'Picturesque Representation of the Costumes of Great Britain', J. A. Atkinson; Miller & Walker, 1807. Note external frog hook. (Priest Colln.)



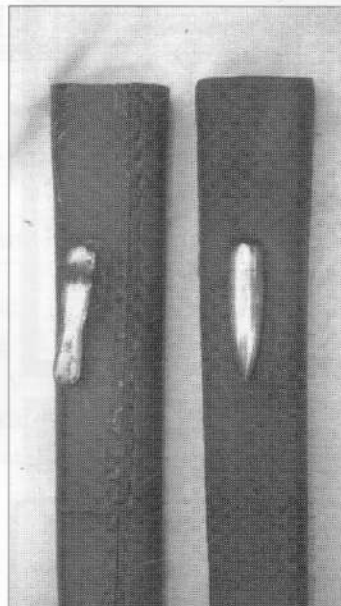
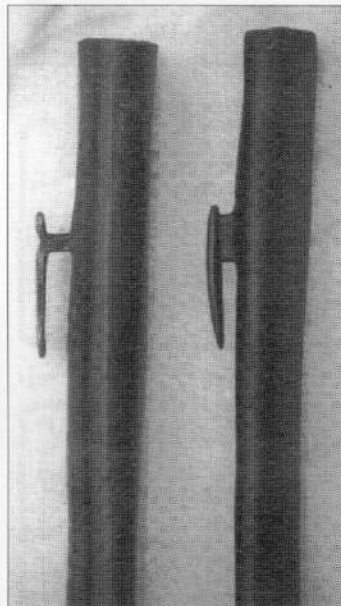


side, the bayonets were worn with their sockets away from the body of the soldier. In wear the studs were visible on the outside of the frog.

Other scabbards from this era illustrated that reinforced lockets enabled suspension in a variety of ways. When the sewn seam was on the same face as the frog stud the bayonet socket was worn in the post-1784 manner, against the hip. Decorative tooling on the sheath leather was then visible even though the frog concealed the stud.

Scabbards with the locket reversed, so that it now placed the oval attachment point on the apex of the shorter faces of the body, had the stitches on the wider face. These were worn with the stud exposed on the outside of the frog, but the seam against the hip of the infantryman.

A plate by John Atkinson showed that the Foot Guards wore a scabbard with a long brass hook attached to the short side in 1807. The bayonet socket was worn inwards, and the hook was visible on the outside of the cross belt. A Charles Hamilton Smith drawing of 'Privates of the 1st



#### Far left & left:

Brass scabbard hooks of 1784 (left in each pair) and c.1815; by the latter date the hook had been simplified and the stitching moved. (Priest Colln., photographs Ivan Priest)

Regiment of Footguards, on Service' published in 1812 portrayed the concealed frog hook scabbard worn in a buff leather shoulder belt. Obviously it was optional as to which carriage method was used.

There appeared to be some evidence that Ordnance scabbards continued a slightly different evolution to the privately purchased sheaths. Three examples of an early 19th century scabbard were noted with a simplified frog hook. The brass was shaped into an elongated oval with a thickened support riveted through the coarse-textured leather. No locket was present, but the tip of the body was provided with an internal

'funnel' and brass button. The seam was now placed on the side of the wide face in a position that was to remain until the 1860s. Several naval cutlass scabbards of a similar construction, with the same hook, perhaps indicated that this was a maritime sheath design.

Prior to 1814 some attempts were made to make a more secure scabbard for the bayonets on issue. Ordnance records note that Francis Deakin and John & Craxhall Oughton each provided '100 iron scabbards for musket bayonets' in September of 1813 and 1812 respectively<sup>(27)</sup>. Some of these scabbards noted were covered in a fibrous material,

had a round iron frog stud and a brass finial brazed to the tip. They were issued with Land or New Land Pattern bayonets<sup>(28)</sup>.

Despite the competition the brass and leather scabbard survived longer than the iron variety, and remains a prized item to the lucky collector fortunate enough to discover one. **MI**

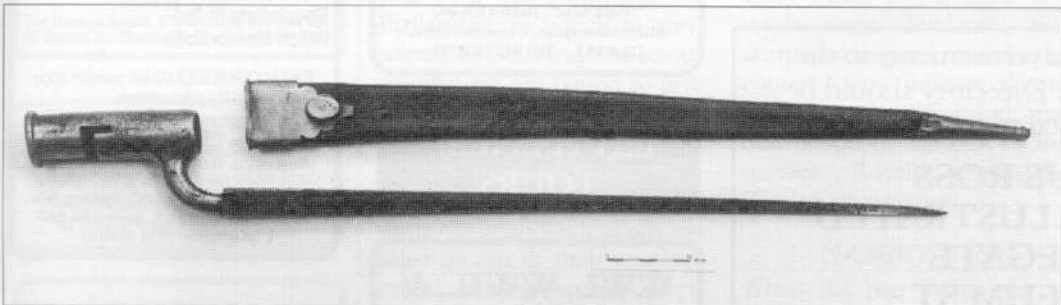
#### Notes

- (25) Groves, D., private correspondence, 3 September 1985.
- (26) The Kentish Notebook, 10 December 1892, p.408.
- (27) Skennerton, I. D., & Richardson, R., *op cit.*, p.53.
- (28) Stephens, F. J., *The Collector's Pictorial Book of Bayonets*, p.22.

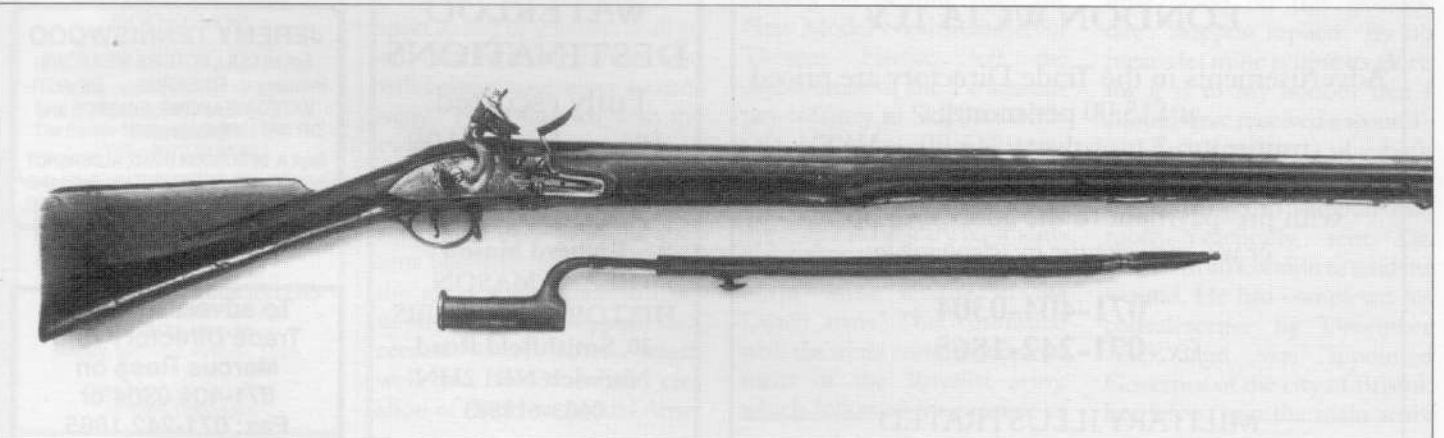
#### Acknowledgements

Many people have aided in the compilation of this paper. Particular thanks are extended to Ivan Priest and Martin Brayley for the photographs, De Witt Bailey for the information shared, Philip Haythornthwaite for the loan of prints and unstinting advice, Dick Marsden and Andy Levchenko for photographs and extra data from Fort Ligonier, Martin Hinchcliffe (National Army Museum), Martin Pegler and the two Marks (HM Tower of London) for help with the examination of artefacts. The following also receive grateful appreciation: Alan Beadle, Derek Complin, Erik Goldstein, Doreen Groves & Michelle Probert (Scottish Development Department, Edinburgh), John Humphries, Ted Huntington, Richard Larn (Longstone Heritage Centre, Isles of Scilly), 'Heis' McCall, J. R. Norris (Wallis & Wallis), Laurie St. John-Groce, Chris Sabine, Joe Serbaroli, Frederick Stephens, J. Martin West (Fort Ligonier Association), and Roy Williams.

India Pattern bayonet and reinforced scabbard, from the Seafeld Colln., Ft. George, Scotland. (Crown Copyright, photo 95870)



Land Pattern musket and bayonet with what appears to be an iron scabbard, 1812-13. (Wallis & Wallis lot 1698, sale 161)





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## GALLERY

# Philip Skippon (2)

KEITH ROBERTS Painting by RICHARD HOOK

This continues the article which commenced in 'MI' No. 45, covering Skippon's early career in the German and Dutch wars, and his service to Parliament in the English Civil War up to and including the Lostwithiel campaign of summer 1644.

Skippon's reputation ensured that he was appointed as Sergeant-Major General for the New Model Army under Sir Thomas Fairfax. He began his work by putting into effect the reorganisation of the three armies of the Earl of Essex, Sir William Waller and the Eastern Association into one, the New Model Army. This involved the disbanding of several regiments; and while the private soldiers were needed for the new army, not all the officers were, and many units were in a state bordering upon mutiny. Skippon resolved the unrest by drawing the soldiers together and doing some plain talking. He began by reminding them of their loyalties:

'Gentlemen and fellow-soldiers all, I am now to acquaint you with the commands of Parliament, to which in conscience to God, and love to our country, we are bound to give all cheerful and ready obedience. There is a necessity lies upon us (since three armies are to be reduced into one) that some commanders and officers must go out of their employments wherein they now are; it is not out of any personal disrespect to any of you that shall go off, and therefore I hope you will behave yourselves accordingly'. He continued with the even plainer warning: 'Let no man deceive himself, for although he may perhaps occasion some trouble in the present business, yet in the issue the greatest mischief will fall upon himself'. Skippon succeeded where others might well have failed, and the creation of the New Model Army

as a fighting force from the remnants of three others owes more to him than to either Fairfax or Cromwell.

This new army consisted of 12 infantry regiments organised in three brigades; 11 cavalry regiments; a regiment of dragoons (mounted infantry), and an artillery train. Its theoretical establishment of 600 men plus officers for cavalry regiments and 1,200 men plus officers for infantry regiments gave the New Model Army a ratio of nearly one cavalryman to every two infantrymen. According to contemporary tactical doctrines this was the optimum ratio for an army which was to campaign with a view to forcing battle in open country. The number of infantry regiments was considered to be the optimum for an army which was to fight as a single force. Evidently, this army was designed according to contemporary military theory with one aim in mind: the destruction of the best of the surviving Royalist armies, the King's Oxford Army.

### NASEBY, 1645

When the two forces met at Naseby on 14 June 1645, the New Model's commander, Sir Thomas Fairfax, left the deployment of the Parliamentary infantry to Skippon while Oliver Cromwell, as Lieutenant General of the Horse, deployed the cavalry. Skippon drew up his infantry regiments in a simple style which he had learnt while serving in the Dutch army. This contrasted with the more complex deployment of the Royalist army, which followed the practice of



*Philip Skippon Esq. Major General of the Army etc.*

Contemporary engraving of Philip Skippon as Sergeant-Major General of the New Model Army. (Author's collection)

German armies during the Thirty Years' War. Skippon's simpler formation proved more robust.

Although the first line of Parliamentary infantry regiments was broken by the Royalist attack, Skippon's reserves in the second line followed his instructions and advanced to sweep away the Royalist infantry before they could regroup. Once again Skippon fought in the front lines with his infantry, receiving a wound in his right side from a musket bullet at close range which burst through his armour and passed entirely through his body. Despite the agony of his wound Skippon stayed in the saddle for two and a half hours, until his infantry had rallied from their early reverse and overthrown their Royalist opponents. One of his officers, George Bishop, helped him from the battlefield to a nearby house where his wound was dressed, and remarked: 'Sir, your wound hath caused a little cloud on this glorious day'. Skippon replied: 'By no means let mine eclipse its glory, for it is to my honour that I should have received a wound'.

The Speakers of both Houses of Parliament sent letters of thanks to Skippon and, more practically, sent Dr. Clarke from London to tend his wound. He had completed his convalescence by December 1645, and was appointed Governor of the city of Bristol; but left to join the main army



and to direct siege operations against Oxford in May 1646. Oxford surrendered on terms in June before an assault could be mounted. In December that year Skippon commenced his Parliamentary career and was returned as MP for Barnstable. He was also entrusted with command of the treasure convoy of £200,000 sent from London to Newcastle as payment of the price the Scots demanded for the surrender of King Charles. Skippon remained at Newcastle with his own regiment, and the king was taken south to Holmby House.

Skippon was not involved in the early stages of the mutiny of the New Model Army, but he was too prominent a military leader to be left alone. A group of Presbyterian MPs led by Denzil Holles hoped to use Skippon's standing in the army to persuade some of the soldiers to volunteer for service in Ireland and the rest to disband peacefully on worthless promises of settlement of their arrears of pay. Skippon had managed to prevent mutiny on the formation of the New Model, and Holles' group hoped that by appointing him as commander of a new army for service in Ireland he could resolve their difficulties. Skippon was reluctant to accept this appointment, but was prevailed upon to do so, only because he was persuaded it was essential for the good of the state.

### THE ARMY MUTINY

Skippon's appointment was now overtaken by events, however, as the temper of the army grew steadily more mutinous. Three delegates or 'agitators' from the cavalry — Edward Sexby, William Allen and Thomas Shepherd — brought him a letter signed by themselves and 13 others which expressed their complaints, and sought his aid as one 'that hath so often been engaged with us, and from that heart that hath as often been so tender over us'. Skippon, an MP himself, read the letter in the House of Commons the following day, to the fury of the Presbyterian party led by Holles. The soldiers were questioned in the

Commons, but their testimony only showed the length of their service in the Parliament cause: all claimed to have served since the battle of Edgehill, and their declared determination to receive some just settlement. One recalled that Skippon had found him lying wounded after the battle of Newbury, and left him five shillings (over a week's pay for a soldier) to support himself while he recovered, a shilling for each wound. Skippon recalled the incident, and although he did not agree with their making demands of Parliament he had some sympathy with the men themselves. He spoke up for the army delegates during the debate, saying that 'they were honest men, and he wished they might not be severely dealt with'.

It was now apparent that serious steps must be taken to deal with the mutiny, and Skippon was appointed as Parliament's chief commissioner to discuss terms with the army; the other commissioners were Oliver Cromwell, Henry Ireton and Charles Fleetwood. This placed Skippon in an invidious

position, as although he felt a strong loyalty to Parliament and the good of the country as a whole he also sympathised with the soldiers' complaints. He had personal experience of the privation caused by arrears of pay from his service in European armies, and must have felt that the settlement offered by Parliament was a callous return for his soldiers' efforts on their behalf. Even so, he might have been able to use the great personal influence which he retained over the common soldiers to bring about a settlement if only Parliament had been prepared to offer reasonable terms. Without acceptable terms as a viable bargaining counter Skippon was caught in the middle of an insoluble argument; and as a result his influence was 'quite lost in the army by endeavouring to please both sides'.

When the army seized the king as a bargaining counter on 4 June 1647, Skippon formally advised Parliament that they had no option but to accede to the soldiers' demand for their

arrears of pay, as they now faced armed revolt. Finally appreciating the gravity of their situation, Parliament voted the army its arrears; but it was now too late, as the mutiny had developed political overtones and this belated promise was no longer enough. Writing after the event, Holles considered that 'by this unfortunate man's (Skippon's) interposition at that time... all was dashed'; but Holles had miscalculated the depth of the army's discontent from the beginning, and Skippon's estimate of the position was entirely accurate.

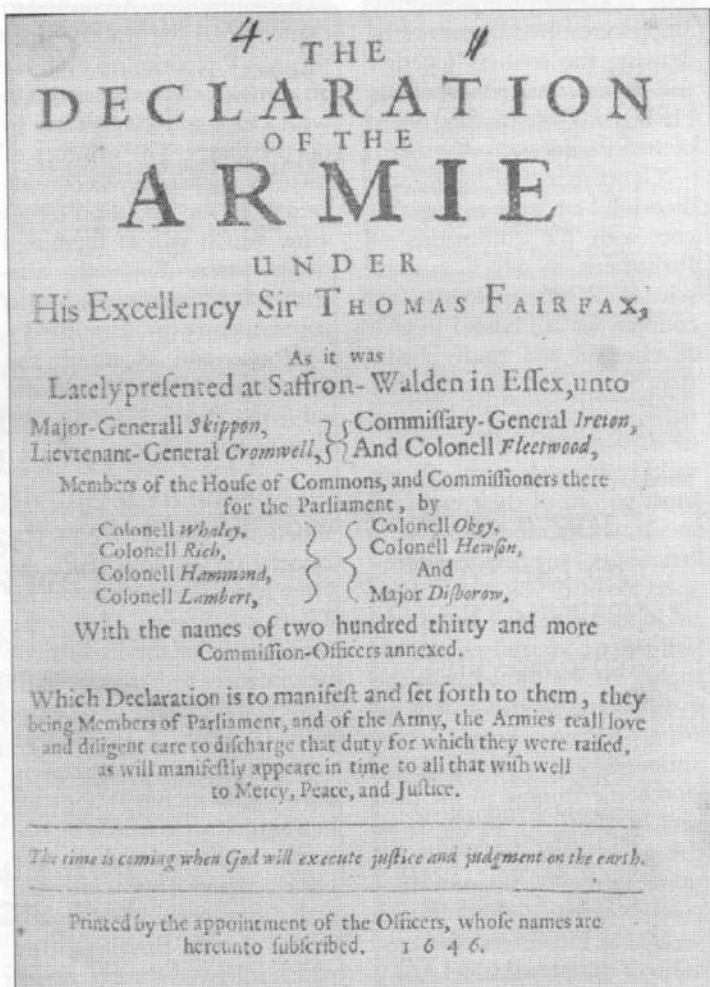
Philip Skippon brought Parliament's latest offer to the army at a major rendezvous at Triploe Heath near Cambridge on 10 June; and although he was met with respect, he heard cries of 'Justice, Justice' when he rode by each regiment instead of the cheers he would have received a year before. Although he continued to negotiate with the army on Parliament's behalf, Skippon no longer had any hopes of reconciliation. In July he wrote to the Speaker of the House of Commons seeking release from his appointments as commander of the proposed army for Ireland and its chief commissioner in negotiations with the army. This marked the end of his attempt at mediation, and he rejoined the army in his old capacity as Sergeant-Major General. When the army made its triumphal entry into London on 6 August it was led by all three of its old commanders, Sir Thomas Fairfax (Lord General), Philip Skippon (Sergeant-Major General) and Oliver Cromwell (Lieutenant General of the Horse).

### THE SECOND CIVIL WAR

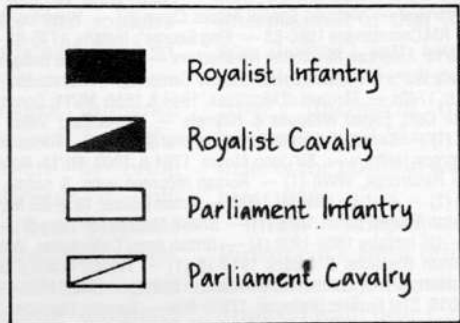
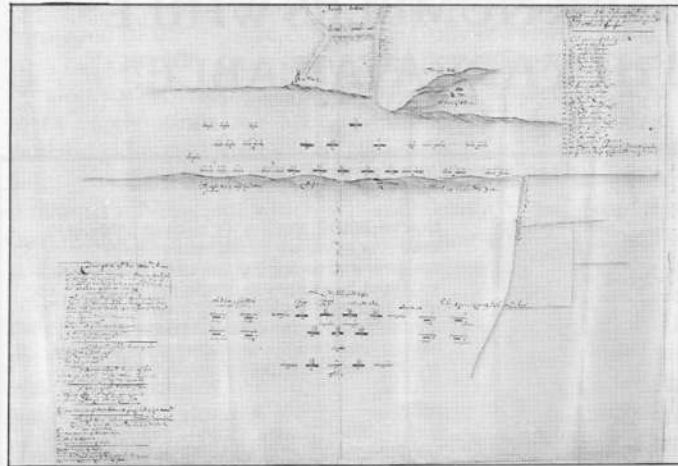
As negotiations for a political settlement continued, former Parliamentarians joined with

**Continued on page 50**

*'The Declaration of the Armie', the famous pamphlet printed at the direction of representatives of the mutinous New Model Army to show the basis of their dispute with their Parliamentary masters. Skippon was appointed one of the Parliamentary commissioners to negotiate with the army. (Author's collection)*







## Continued from page 48

Royalists and the Scots to oppose the army in a second civil war. While the army marched north to crush their opponents at the Battle of Preston (17-19 August 1648), London remained the key to the country. Skippon was the man chosen to command the London Trained Bands once again and hold London secure, possibly because he was the only man trusted by the army, the City authorities and the pro-army MPs. With unrest seething throughout the City Skippon retained control; and when the Royalist Earl of Norwich marched a force to the outskirts of the City and seized Bow Bridge and Stratford, Skippon was able to persuade the Trained Bands to march and oppose it. This was one of the most critical events of the war, as although Norwich had too small a force to take the City if the Trained Bands would oppose him, it was large enough to spark a

### Above:

#### Royalist Army (bottom).

'Description of his Majesties Arme as they were drawne unto severall bodyes at the Battle of Naseby (on) the 24th day of June 1645 (actually the 14th June, of course) consisting of 4000 foot and 3500 horse with 12 pieces of Ordnance which Battle was fought the same day.

The Arme command by his Heighnesse Prince Rupert as General and that day charged in the Right Wing of the Arme with Prince Maurice of 5 Divisions of Horse and 200 Musquetiers. (1) Prince Rupert's and Prince Maurice's Troops. (2) Prince Rupert's Regiment. (3) The Queen's and Prince Maurice's Regiments. (4) The Earle of Northampton's Regiment. (5) Sir William Vaughan's Regiment.

Sir Bernard Astley's Tertia of Foot (6) The Duke of York's Regiment. (7) Colonel (Sir Edward) Hopton's Regiments. (8) Colonel (Sir Richard) Page's Regiment.

Sir Henry Bard's Tertia of Foot (9) Sir Henry Bard's and Colonel (Rhys) Thomas' Regiment. (10) Sir John Owen's and Colonel (Radcliffe) Gerard's Regiments.

Sir George Lisle's Tertia (11) Sir George Lisle's and (Colonel William) St. George's Regiments. (12) Shrewsbury Foot commanded by (Lieutenant) Colonel (George) Smith. (13) (14) (15) Three Divisions of Horse between the Foot com-

manded by Colonel (Sir Thomas) Howard.

The left wing of Horse commanded by Sir Marmaduke Langdale, being the Northern Horse (in) five Divisions & 200 Musquetiers. (16) (17) (18) Three Divisions of Northern Horse. (19) Colonel (Sir Horatio) Cary's Regiment. (20) Northern Division of Horse. (21) (22) Two Divisions of Horse. (23) His Majesties Regiment of Foot. (24) His Majesties Life Guard of Horse with his own person. (25) Prince Rupert's Regiment of Foot.

Note: The infantry blocks shown behind the cavalry on each wing consist of musketeers, fifty men in each block.

#### Parliament Army (top).

'Description of the Parliament's Arme as they were drawne unto severall bodyes at the Battle of Naseby (on) the 24th. (14th) June 1645 commanded by Sir Thomas Fairfax.' (1) General's Division of the Life Guards. (2) Sir Robert Pye's Regiment. (3) Colonel (Edward) Whalley's Regiment. (4) Colonel (Thomas) Sheffield's Division. (5) Colonel (John) Fiennes' Regiment. (6) Colonel (Edward) Rossiter's Regiment. (7) The Associated Horse. (8) The General's Regiment of Foot. (9) Colonel (Edward) Montagu's Regiment. (10) Colonel (John) Pickering's Regiment. (11) Sir Hardress Waller's Regiment. (12) Major General (Philip) Skippon ('s Regiment). (13)

The key for the units shown is identical to de Gomme's original and the units are recorded as he wrote them on the plan. It is possible that some minor changes were made to the formation shown on the actual day of battle, but the basic tactical format would have remained the same. Seventeenth century spelling is variable at the best of times, and de Gomme's is affected by the fact that English was not his native language. Therefore the spelling in the key has been simplified, and additional details of the commanding officers' names added.

Lieutenant Colonel Pride's Regiment. (14) Colonel (Robert) Hammond's Regiment. (15) Colonel (Thomas) Rainsborough's Regiment. (16) (Lieutenant) Colonel Pride's Reserve. (17) Colonel (John) Butler's Regiment. (18) Colonel (Cornelius) Vermuyden's Regiment. (19) Commissary General (Henry) Ireton's Regiment. (20) Colonel (Nathaniel) Rich's Regiment. (21) Colonel (Charles) Fleetwood's Regiment. (22) The Troops of the Association. (23) Train of Artillery Guarded with Firelocks (not shown on the redrawn plan). (24) The Forlorn Hope of Commanded Musketeers.

Note: de Gomme records that the line of hedges shown on the right of his plan were lined by 'Dragons of the parlement', Colonel John Okey's Regiment of Dragons.



#### Opposite page top & insert:

Sir Bernhard De Gomme's plan of the Battle of Naseby (14 June 1645). The main illustration is a copy of the plan by Derek Stone, with the original shown as a photograph. De Gomme was an engineer officer on the staff of the Royalist general Prince Rupert, and his duties included drawing up plans of his general's proposed battle formations for distribution among the senior commanders. This type of plan was drawn up at the commencement of the campaign and adjusted when major changes in the army's composition occurred, such as the addition or subtraction of significant contingents. The surviving plan in the British Library is a more carefully drawn version of the original 'Headquarters' plan; and also includes the Parliament's army formation, probably from the design shown in Joshua Sprigge's book on the New Model Army campaigns *Anglia Rediviva* (printed in 1647).

It is a valuable plan for anyone with an interest in the Battle of Naseby, for three reasons. Firstly, it shows the development of Prince Rupert's tactical ideas; he had evidently decided upon this style in 1644 after the Battle of Marston Moor (2 July 1644), since the same type of tactical formation can be seen in a similar plan showing the Royalist army at the relief of Donnington Castle (10 November 1644). Secondly, it allows a comparison between the tactical styles of the two armies, Royalist and Parliamentarian, at their decisive meeting. The Royalist plan shows Prince Rupert's preference for a German style of deployment developed during the Thirty Years' War. The Parliament battle plan drawn up by Philip Skippon and Oliver Cromwell shows their preference for the simpler style used in the Dutch army. Thirdly, the space actually taken up by the formations of each side can be calculated since the plan shows a contemporary professional soldier's view of how the formations were drawn up. This shows the amount of space which would be required between each unit. The space taken up by the units themselves can be calculated by estimating their strengths and how many lines deep they were drawn up — six deep for infantry and three deep for cavalry for both sides in 1645. (Original by courtesy of the Board of Trustees of the British Library and redrawn plan by Derek Stone)

Royalist rising if the Bands refused to muster. In the face of the London Trained Bands Norwich could only march away to join the Royalist forces in Colchester. The main interest of the citizen soldiers of the Militia was in their families and businesses, and in the confusing political climate of the time Skippon was a man they knew and felt they could trust — one certainty in a 'world turned upside down'.

After the Second Civil War Skippon was appointed to the special tribunal which put King Charles on trial for his life but, like Fairfax, he refused to take part in it. He remained a respected figure for the remainder of his life, sitting in Cromwell's Parliaments in 1654 and 1656 as MP for King's Lynn, as a member of the Council of State and in December 1657 in the House of Lords. He was also still regarded as the one man who could control London in times of disturbance; and he held it again in 1650 when Cromwell marched north once more to crush the Scots during the Third Civil War, in 1655 during the Royalist John Penruddock's rising, and again in 1659 when 'Tumbledown Dick' Cromwell's brief government fell. He lived to see John Lambert go north to oppose the march of

General George Monk's army on London, but died before a new Parliament met to restore the Monarchy.

#### THE LAST WORD

Throughout his career as a Parliamentary soldier Skippon's personal qualities of courage, determination and integrity gained him the respect and loyalty of his soldiers and the admiration of his enemies. His exceptional experience and ability made him the perfect Sergeant-Major General of his day, with the technical competence to visualise an army's battle formations and the practical ability to turn paper plans into reality. A very tough soldier, he was able to continue in command of his infantry at Naseby with a wound which would have killed a lesser man on the spot; but his soldiers' respectful comments also speak of his

**Richard Hook's reconstruction on the rear cover shows Skippon as Sergeant-Major General of the New Model Army at the Battle of Naseby, 14 June 1645. Four contemporary engravings of Skippon survive, all dating from around 1646-47; in each the features illustrated are all so similar that they are clearly based on a common original portrait. Three of the engravings show Skippon in the lighter armour worn on campaign, the fourth in the heavy cuirassier armour rarely worn in the field but often depicted in portraits as a link with the knightly past.**

At Naseby Skippon was shot in the right side at close range by a Royalist musketeer; the bullet 'pierced his armour and body quite through', leaving 'five or six inches between the hole it made going in and coming out'. Despite this he remained in the saddle, encouraging his infantry, until they had rallied and beaten back their Royalist opponents.

compassion for their suffering, his fighting alongside them in the front lines and sharing the hardships of their marches. His contemporaries stressed his reliability using terms such as 'stout Skippon' or 'honest Skippon', but perhaps the most revealing summary of this remarkable soldier comes from the epitaph written by his step-daughter Katherine Phillips, daughter of his second wife. This concludes:

'For his great heart did such a temper show/Stout as a Rock, yet soft as melting Snow./In him so prudent, and yet so sincere./The Serpent much, the Dove did more appear./He was above the little Arts of State, And scorn'd to sell his Peace to mend his Fate;/Anxious of nothing, but an inward spot, His hand was open, but his conscience not./Just to his Word, to all Religious kind./In Duty strict, in Bounty unconfin'd./And yet so modest, 'twas to him less pain/To do great things, than hear them told again.'

**MI**

#### Note:

I am obliged to Dr. Peter Gaunt, Chairman of the Cromwell Association, for mentioning Katherine Phillips' verse to me.

*Ensign of Foot. Each company of infantry in a regiment carried its own flag, both the flag and the officer who carried it being described as an 'Ensign'. This figure provides a good illustration of the appearance of junior officers on either side at Naseby. (Courtesy the Trustees of the Royal Armouries)*





**Philip Skippon,  
Naseby, 14 June 1645**

